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A

VINDICATION OF UNITARIANISM,

IN REPLY TO

MR. WARDLAW'S DISCOURSES

ON THE

SOCINIAN CONTROVERSY.

By JAMES YATES, M.A.

"Read, not to contradict or confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider." *Lord Bacon.*

BOSTON:

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*****

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ADVERTISEMENT.

As Mr. Wardlaw's Discourses have been reprinted and circulated extensively in this country, it has been thought, that a republication also of Mr. Yates' reply will be acceptable; and the more so, as it is written with remarkable ability and good temper. Some *notes* and an *Appendix* have been added by the American editor.

Boston, January, 1816.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
PART I.—Introduction	1
Chap. I. On the general principles to be followed in investigating the truth of religious doctrines	11
Chap. II. On the regard paid to the Sacred Scriptures by Unitarians	17
Chap. III. On the proper method of ascertaining the sense of Scripture	31
Chap. IV. On the propriety of believing in mysteries	44
PART II.—Introduction	58
Chap. I. The evidence for the unity of God from the light of nature	ib
Chap. II. The evidence for the unity of God from the testimony of the Scriptures	65
Chap. III. Evidence that the Father is the only true God	69
Chap. IV. Statement of the Unitarian doctrine concerning the person of Christ. Evidence that he was not God, but a distinct being from him	74
Chap. V. Evidence that our Lord Jesus Christ is inferiour and subordinate to God the Father.	79
Chap. VI. Evidence for the Unitarian doctrine concerning the *wisdom* and *knowledge* of Christ, *viz.* that they were *imparted* to him by God the Father	88

CHAP. VII. Evidence for the Unitarian doctrine concerning the origin of Christ's *power*, *viz.* that it was *given* to him. 92
CHAP. VIII. On the use of the phrases "Holy Spirit," &c. in the Sacred Scriptures - - - - - - - - - - - - - 114

PART III.—INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - - - - - - 135
CHAP. I. Statements of what the doctrine of the Trinity is, and of the evidence requisite in each case to prove it - ib.
CHAP. II. Examination of the evidence for a *Plurality* of Persons in the Godhead - - - - - - - - - - - - - 146
CHAP. III. Examination of the evidence for a *Trinity* of Persons in the Godhead - - - - - - - - - - - - - 157
CHAP. IV. Of the doctrine of Christ's divine and human natures - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 174
CHAP. V. Examination of the passages, in which the peculiar *titles* of Deity are supposed to be applied to Jesus Christ 182
CHAP. VI. Examination of the passages, in which the peculiar *attributes* of Deity are supposed to be ascribed to Christ 213
CHAP. VII. Examination of the passages, in which the peculiar *works* of Deity are supposed to be ascribed to Christ 231
CHAP. VIII. Examination of the passages in which *supreme worship* is supposed to be given to Christ - - - - - 238
CHAP. IX. Examination of the remaining arguments produced by Mr. Wardlaw to prove the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 257
CHAP. X. Examination of the evidence produced to prove the distinct Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit - - 269
CHAP. XI. Prevalence of Unitarianism in the early ages of the Christian Church. Origin and progress of the Trinitarian doctrine - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 276
CHAP. XII. Other doctrines of Mr. Wardlaw's Discourses. Correspondence between him and the Author. Conclusion. 284
APPENDIX.

VINDICATION OF UNITARIANISM, &c.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

In commencing a reply to Mr. Wardlaw's "Discourses on the Socinian Controversy," I undertake a task by no means consonant to my own feelings. The discussion of disputed points in theology, even when conducted in the calmest manner, has a tendency to impede the exercise of the devotional and benevolent affections; and for this reason, having once formed my opinion by a diligent and impartial study of the Scriptures, I have in general avoided the paths of religious controversy, except when the circumstances of my situation obliged me to enter anew upon arguments, which, though I hoped they would be useful to others, were to me always unprofitable. It is no palliative of my aversion to this employment, that my opponent is a man, for whom, so far as the difference of our religious sentiments has encouraged an intercourse, I entertain a very high esteem and warm attachment.

Such an undertaking is however in the present case unavoidable. Mr. Wardlaw has quoted my sermon preached at the opening of the Unitarian Chapel in this city, and has blamed one of its assertions, relating to the

practice of Trinitarians, as "illiberal and unjust." (See p. 167.*) Upon my head also chiefly falls the charge, which (Preface, p. vi.) he directs against the Unitarians of Glasgow in general, of "grossly misrepresenting" many of the sentiments held by the Orthodox, of causing "the weak, the wavering, and the ill-informed" to become the "dupes" of this misrepresentation, and of leading them "a prey to the wiles of sophistry, and the imposing influence of high pretensions to learning and candour." Such accusations from so respectable a quarter demand our most serious reflection; and, having impartially considered how far they apply to us, we ought to come forward, either to vindicate ourselves with modest firmness, or to retract our assertions in the same publick manner, in which they have been advanced.

Besides, Mr. Wardlaw's discourses have been honoured, as they deserved, with great attention and countenance; and, having been widely circulated by a large impression, are, I understand, now generally affirmed to be unanswerable. If therefore we continue to maintain our former principles, we are bound to show that his triumph is not so complete. This is necessary, not only to preserve the sentiments, which we dearly value, from contempt, decay, and reprobation, but to prove, that we do not adhere to them through wilful blindness and obstinate aversion to the truth.

Though compelled to engage in this controversy against my inclination, I shall be supported by the hope, that my labour will not be bestowed in vain. In order that Unitarianism may be gratefully and cordially embraced, it is only requisite that the arguments for and against it be impartially studied. The moderation, candour, and good

* The references thoughout the volume have been altered, to apply to the *Boston edition* of *Wardlaw's Discourses*.

sense, which the inhabitants of this place have in general evinced, whenever the principles of Unitarianism have been brought before them, and the uniform civility and kindness, which I have reason thankfully to acknowledge in persons of all descriptions, with whom I have had any acquaintance, encourage me to expect, that by some few at least my publication will be perused with attention, and that the statement of the evidence in favour of each of the opposite systems will thus be effectual in leading them to the truth as it is in Jesus.

Having heard Mr. Wardlaw's discourses with great interest, and afterwards read them with great care, I have found much to admire, but nothing to change my conviction of the strict unity of God, and the subordination of Jesus Christ. I have no doubt that the delivery of them proceeded from laudable motives. It gives me great pleasure to express the approbation due to the eloquence, with which they are composed, and the powers of reasoning, which they display. I heartily join in the universal confession, that the Trinitarian system could not have been more ably defended. Mr. Wardlaw has shown peculiar judgment in confining himself to those arguments, which have usually been considered as clear and decisive, instead of bringing forward all the passages of Scripture, which have been conceived to bear remotely upon the subject, and by insisting upon which other advocates have weakened the cause they intended to support. Whilst I have been pleased with the ingenuity and alertness displayed in defending points of difficult and abstract speculation, I have been edified by the useful observations of a practical nature, which are scattered through the volume, and which, I would hope, may redeem it from oblivion, when men have learned to value plain truths, pertaining to life and godliness, above what is mysterious and inexplicable.

Having willingly given to these discourses the commendation which they merit, let me now be permitted to state in what respects I think them defective. Mr. Wardlaw affirms solemnly (p. 93.) that his only object is TRUTH; and, doubtless, the defence of the Calvinistick doctrines, which he believes to be true, was his only object. But there is a wide difference between defending a particular system, previously assumed as true, and pursuing truth independently of system,—a difference, which will materially affect the manner, in which a man states his own arguments, and views the arguments of others. Mr. Wardlaw's whole style and language in this controversy show, that he has never put his mind into that state of calm and impartial deliberation, which is necessary to collect and arrange the proofs on either side, and to judge in favour of which opinion the evidence preponderates. On the contrary, he has set out with a bold, undaunted, and impetuous zeal for a certain system; and, believing this system to be true, and that "with its establishment and progress are connected the glory of God and the salvation of men," (Preface, p. vii.) he exerts his utmost powers to impress it upon the mind, and labours to fortify his argument by bringing out all the images and strong expressions, all the affecting and solemn tones, all the facts and allusions, all the faults and errours of his opponents, by which he can strike his hearers with astonishment and horrour at the folly, the blindness, the perverseness of those, who refuse to be converted by such brilliant and decisive evidence. That an orthodox preacher should have recourse to these expedients in order to rouse the languid conviction of his own flock, may be perfectly proper; but they are utterly subversive of that temper of cool, patient, and unbiassed investigation, which may be expected in one

who makes it his "simple and exclusive object" to ascertain Truth.

We find also in Mr. Wardlaw's volume a kind of *management* and *generalship*, which a Votary of Truth would scorn. Having very few proofs to adduce, he makes the best use of what he has; brings them forward many different times, dwells upon them at great length, turns them about, and shows them in the most pleasing variety of lights. Yet, lest after all they should fail to make a sufficient impression, he takes care to inform his hearers, that these are only a *specimen* of what he might have brought forward; the passages, which contain his doctrine, are so numerous, that he should weary their patience and exceed his own strength, if he were to produce them all, and hence he is obliged to *select* a few of the more prominent. This "PRINCIPLE OF SELECTION," as Mr. Wardlaw calls it, I fear I shall have frequent occasion to expose, and to show that, where he professes merely to bring out a sample, he has nearly or entirely exhausted his store.

Another manoeuvre, by which Mr. Wardlaw guards his readers against the seductions of Unitarianism, is this. Instead of presenting a fair and full view of the Unitarian system in its leading principles and general aspects, he makes it his object to bring into notice every thing absurd or dangerous, that was ever written by a Unitarian. Indeed, through zeal to collect all the offensive matter to be found in Unitarian publications, he has in one instance, at least as the passage will be applied by his readers, violated fact. After some very excellent remarks on the impropriety of indulging a presumptuous rashness in the pursuit of truth, he quotes a passage from the Appendix to the Life of Priestley, showing with what indifference this fearless temerity enables a man to contemplate the conclusion, *that there is no God*. (See p. 168.) If he

had turned to the title-page of the volume, and page iv of the preface, he would have seen, that the author, whose words he has quoted without mentioning any name except that of Priestley, was Mr. Thomas Cooper, President Judge of the fourth district of Pennsylvania; and, if he had made the inquiry which became him before producing this passage as an illustration of the spirit cherished by Unitarians, he would have learned that Judge Cooper is *not* a Unitarian. To the odium and ridicule, which may be excited by such attempts, Unitarians are from the nature of their principles peculiarly exposed. Since they encourage free inquiry to a far greater extent than any other sect of Christians, and, though united in maintaining a few great principles, allow a variety of opinion upon minor topicks, individual authors often espouse sentiments and employ language, to which the great body would refuse their sanction. It is easy for a nibbling adversary to seize hold of these peculiarities, and to drag them into open day. But a generous disputant will despise the low trick of gravely refuting the fancies, mistakes, or hasty conclusions of individual writers, instead of considering the broad principles espoused by the whole party. What a long train of grotesque figures might *I* summon to decorate my triumph, if I were to collect the rash or foolish expressions of individual Trinitarians, and to enter into a minute discussion of their bearings and consequences. The Comedy of Errours would be so protracted, that the world itself would scarcely contain the books that should be written.

Another expedient of Mr. Wardlaw's to excite contempt towards the doctrines of Unitarians is the frequent use of Notes of Admiration, which are exhibited either single, double, or treble (! !! !!!) so as to form a graduated scale, by which every person, who has sense enough to count *One*,

Two, Three, may estimate the precise quantity of folly in the sentiment exposed. But if a phrase or opinion is really ridiculous, why may it not be left to make its own impression? What occasion is there to *render* it ridiculous by such an apparatus? Is it not enough, that a poor Unitarian critick should be called, *ignorant*, *extravagant*, *sophistical*, and *credulous?* Must he also hear his translations repeated from the Pulpit in an affected tone of astonishment, or see them issuing from the Press bristled round with Dashes and Notes of Admiration?

Those who know the usual mildness and urbanity of Mr. Wardlaw's manners, may naturally expect, that the same amiable temper should pervade a work, having an immediate reference to the nature and design of Christianity. But, with the exception of a few gleams of benevolent compassion for his opponents, he has not offended against the "ancient and fundamental rules of theological controversy," either by the neglect of contumelious language, or by avoiding positiveness and dogmatism. To the charges of *impiety*, *obstinacy*, *disingenuousness*, *wildness*, &c. so often preferred against Unitarians, we ought not to be insensible. But every indulgence should be allowed to one, who conceives that his most important principles are basely and violently attacked, especially if he thinks that they are in any danger of being overthrown. Instead therefore of entertaining the least particle of resentment, I would adopt the pathetick and forcible apology of St. Augustine for the errours of his opponents; "Illi saeviant in vos, qui nesciunt quo cum labore verum inveniatur, et quam difficile caveantur errores. Illi in vos saeviant, qui nesciunt quam rarum et arduum sit, carnalia phantasmata piae mentis serenitate superare. Illi in vos saeviant, qui nesciunt quantis gemitibus et suspiriis fiat, ut quantulacunque parte possit intel-

ligi Deus. Postremo, illi in vos saeviant, qui nullo tali errore decepti sunt, quali vos deceptos vident."*

The only use, which I wish to make of Mr. Wardlaw's petulant expressions, is to be more on my guard against the admission of similar language into my own pages. Although I cannot venture to make any promise of greater moderation, yet it is my intention in the following reply, *in general* to answer only the ARGUMENTS in Mr. Wardlaw's publication, leaving the CONTUMELY for those, who choose to defile themselves with it.

Another principle, which I have laid down for myself, is to vindicate those doctrines alone, in maintaining which all Unitarians are agreed, without entering into the discussion of the subordinate questions, concerning which they differ among themselves. This method is not only *necessary* in a work, which professes to be a vindication of *Unitarianism*, but it has the advantage of greatly abridging the labour both for myself and for my readers. According to this plan, many large portions of Mr. Wardlaw's book, consisting of criticisms on "The Improved Version," and discussions of opinions which do not affect the general principles of Unitarianism, will be passed over without any notice.

I think it probable, that the chief effect produced by this controversy will be a conviction in the minds of candid and sensible judges, that the differences of sentiment be-

* Let those rage against you, who know not with what labour truth is discovered, and with what difficulty errours are avoided. Let those rage against you, who know not how rare and difficult an attainment it is, to subdue carnal imaginations by the serenity of a pious mind. Let those rage against you, who know not with what heavy sighs and groans the knowledge of God is even in the least degree acquired. Let those rage against you, who have never been deceived by such errours as they observe in you.

tween the two contending parties are much less than is commonly supposed. In perusing the Discourses of my opponent, it has often occurred to me, that his Orthodoxy is little more than *Unitarianism in a Mist;* and, if our readers shall still think, that there is any thing real or substantial in those mysterious tenets, superadded by Mr. Wardlaw to the plain truths, in holding which we are both agreed, I trust such persons will however acknowledge, that, under the government of a Being infinitely wise and good, it is impossible that the everlasting happiness of mankind should depend upon their perception of such dim points and dusky distinctions.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED IN INVESTIGATING THE TRUTH OF RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES.

The use of Reason in matters of religion is threefold; first, to derive from the appearances of nature the proofs of the Existence, the Attributes, the Providence, and the Moral government of God; secondly, to establish the Truth, Excellence, and Divine Origin of the Jewish and Christian Religions; and thirdly, to determine the sense of the Sacred Scriptures.

The use of Revelation is to deliver doctrines and precepts, highly conducive to the virtue and happiness of mankind, but which, unless proceeding immediately from God, would be either unknown or little regarded.

When the Divine Origin of the Jewish and Christian Religions has been proved by rational evidence, any doctrine, which is shown by a just interpretation of the Scriptures to be contained in those Religions, ought to be received as indisputably true.

If Reason be rightly employed, its dictates can never be in opposition to the testimony of Revelation. On the contrary, Reason and Revelation mutually support each other. It is proper therefore to illustrate and confirm every religious doctrine by appealing both to the assertions of the Scriptures, and to the appearances of Nature and the course of Providence.

To these propositions, I presume, Mr. Wardlaw will readily assent. They express the principles, upon which he appears in general to have proceeded in the management of his various arguments. These principles are also universally acknowledged among Unitarians. Con-

cerning preliminaries therefore we are upon the whole agreed. We appeal to reason and to the Scriptures for the proofs of our respective doctrines, assigning to each the province, which I have marked out. Mr. Wardlaw indeed is not perfectly accurate in the statement of his own grounds of argument; in his Preface, (p. ix.) he observes, that "in defending what he conceives to be the essential articles of Scripture Truth *he has confined himself entirely to the Scriptures themselves;*" but in many parts of his work he endeavours to confirm his opinions by the evidence of *facts*. Thus, in his first Discourse, (p. 5—8,) he adduces the evidence for the Unity of God *from the Uniformity of plan in the material creation;* and in the 8th, (p. 224,) after having maintained the Doctrine of Atonement chiefly upon Scripture grounds, he proposes to confirm it by "*another branch of evidence*," namely, "*the moral effects*, which it is fitted to produce, and to which the faith of it has uniformly given birth." I mention these circumstances, not for the sake of carping at minute inconsistencies, but on account of the importance of accuracy and precision as to the principles of our reasoning, and because I shall probably employ, to confirm my own views of the doctrines of the Scriptures, that evidence, the use of which Mr. Wardlaw disclaims in his Preface, though he has repeatedly brought it forward in his Discourses.

As I am anxious, that our readers should not only perceive the errours and false reasonings contained in Mr. Wardlaw's publication, but should derive from it whatever benefit and improvement it is adapted to afford, I would direct their serious attention to the admirable observations relating to the pursuit of Truth, which occupy a large portion of the 6th Discourse.*

* In this part of his work, (p. 167.) Mr. Wardlaw charges me *with illiberality and injustice* for having said in my Sermon on the Grounds of Uni-

That " in bringing either sentiments or practices to the test of God's word, it should be our sincere desire to have our minds divested of all prejudice, so that we may come to the Bible, not with a view to find confirmation of opinions previously formed, but with humble and earnest solicitude after an answer to Pilate's question, What is Truth ?" that, in the investigation of truth, we should be sedulously on our guard against the deceitfulness of our own hearts, and " fervently implore the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit ;" that we should retain on our minds a constant, deep, and humble sense of our weakness and liableness to err," and avoid that " daring and presumptuous rashness," so " gratifying to the self-complacent vanity of the human heart," but so contrary to the spirit both of true Christianity and of sound Philosophy; that we are apt to be misled by attachments not only to what is *old and long established*, but likewise to what is *new* and what is *singular ;* and that we are often biassed not merely

tarian Dissent, that, " thinking it unsafe to make faith the result of rational inquiry, the Trinitarian determines to ground it upon early prejudice." But is it not a well known fact, that Trinitarians do commonly inculcate upon their children the chief Doctrines of Calvinism, before they are capable of comprehending and appreciating the evidence, by which those Doctrines are supported ? And is not the motive, (as I have stated in my Sermon.) the *benevolent* motive of this conduct, that the parents are apprehensive that their children will probably never embrace the Calvinistick tenets at all, if they are not impressed upon their minds at the earliest age ? The *fact* then being as I have represented, I imagine I have been unfortunate in the *manner* of stating it. If so, I can only wish all readers of my Sermon in future to contemplate the simple fact, and to correct the unfavourable impression arising from the improper manner. At the same time I must observe, that I had affixed a note to the part of my Sermon, in which the passage so offensive to Mr. Wardlaw is contained, excepting the *Independants* and the Baptists in some degree from being classed with those, to whom my observations applied.

by prejudices of the understanding, but also by *predispositions* against "whatever is humbling to human pride and whatever is mortifying to human corruption;" these are maxims, of the truth and importance of which I am strongly sensible, and which I wish may be impressed upon the mind of every one of my readers. Whilst I, as well as Mr. Wardlaw, "am no enemy to free inquiry," I am convinced, that the most *rational* way of using Reason is to employ it *with caution and with modesty.*

The concluding observations of this discourse are so excellent and important, that I shall take the liberty of quoting them at length.

"All truth is good. The truth revealed in 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God,' is peculiarly good:—good in its own nature;—good in its holy and happy influence;—good in all its present, and in all its eternal consequences. Let me exhort you, my brethren, to hold it fast *purely, firmly, meekly, practically.—Purely;* without any admixture of errour:—*firmly;* not 'halting between two opinions,' fluctuating and undecided, or imagining that truth and errour may be embraced and held with equal safety:—*meekly,* maintaining it with an humble consciousness of your own natural blindness, and a feeling of your entire obligation to the enlightening Spirit of God;—with benevolent affection to the persons of your opponents; and with the patience and gentleness of Christ:—*practically;* exemplifying, in the whole of your conduct, personal and social, private and publick, in the family, in the church, and in the world, its renewing, and purifying, and gladdening efficacy.

"To *all,* I would say, and say with the earnestness of affectionate entreaty, 'Search the Scriptures.' Examine them for yourselves. Examine them with a seriousness

becoming the importance of the inquiry, and the magnitude of those consequences that are necessarily connected with it. Derive no foolish and vain excuse for neglecting to do this, from those differences of sentiment which you may observe to subsist amongst the professed followers of Jesus Christ. The sentiments of others are nothing to you. It is not of *others*, but of *yourselves*, that you must give an account to God. Let each individual, therefore, attend to the gospel, as if he were himself the only creature to whom it is addressed. O ! beware of satisfying yourselves at present, with such excuses as, you must be conscious, will never bear the scrutiny of the great day.—Your immortal souls are at stake. Be, therefore, in earnest. Take nothing upon trust. What you hear from us, or from others, examine by the light of the Divine word. If we speak not according to that word, there is no light in us. It is not what *we* say, but what *God* says, that is ' able to save the soul.' "

That we should hold the truth *purely*, *firmly*, *meekly*, and *practically*, is a sentiment, in which all good Christians, both Trinitarians and Unitarians, will cordially unite. But it is of especial consequence, that we should hold it PRACTICALLY, not allowing the articles of religious faith to lie dormant in our minds, after we have once received them, or to float before our fancies as subjects of amusing speculation, but applying them daily and hourly to the improvement of our hearts and the regulation of our conduct. It is only, when thus applied, that Truth has any value ; nay, it is only when thus applied, that we can *hold* truth at all. For however firm may be our belief, and however lively our conceptions, when we come fresh from the contemplation of any religious subject, yet, if we do not combine our knowledge with habitual practice, the impression

upon the understanding will become fainter and fainter, until at last it will appear more fleeting and unsubstantial than a passing meteor. If therefore Unitarians maintain, as one of their distinguishing principles, that the Father is the only proper object of religious worship, let them be careful, that they *devoutly worship the Father*. If they believe, that, one of the principal objects of the mission of Jesus Christ was to deliver his admirable precepts of morality, let them *obey* those precepts; that another great end of his coming was to set before mankind an example of perfect virtue, let them *imitate* that example; that the chief design of his death and resurrection was to establish the doctrine of a future state of retribution, let them *prepare* for that state of retribution; that a good life is the condition, upon which alone God will grant pardon and acceptance and eternal bliss, let them *lead* a good life. We well know, that a man may maintain these opinions most strenuously, that he may talk loudly and reason learnedly about their truth and beautiful simplicity, about their immediate and necessary influence in cherishing love to God and love to man, and yet may neglect to examine whether they have produced these excellent fruits in his own heart, and, while he is labouring with unwearied zeal to reform and enlighten others, may himself become a cast-away.

Although agreeing in general with my opponent concerning the principles, by which we ought to be guided in determining the truth of religious doctrines, yet there are some particulars, in which his work is calculated to convey false ideas to the minds of his readers, and others, which he has not discussed so fully and clearly as their importance seems to require. I think it necessary, therefore, to consider in the three following Chapters, the regard actually paid to

the Scriptures by Unitarians; the proper method of ascertaining the sense of the Scriptures; and the propriety of believing in mysteries.*

[* These cautions against allowing our religious belief to terminate in speculation, are certainly valuable. In the principles, however, mentioned by Mr. Yates as distinguishing Unitarians, he seems rather to have enumerated the peculiarities of a sect of those Christians, rather than to have given those general views which are common to all. Mr. Yates belongs, we believe, to that denomination of Unitarians who hold the simple humanity of Christ. It is, however, only in a few passages that his peculiar bias is discovered. In general he means by Unitarianism simply the doctrine of the perfect Unity of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with those doctrines, *and no others*, which *necessarily* flow from that great truth.—EDITOR.]

CHAPTER II.

ON THE REGARD PAID TO THE SACRED SCRIPTURES BY UNITARIANS.

To some very excellent observations, tending to show the propriety of seeking the Doctrines of the Christian Religion in the Apostolick Epistles, as well as in the Historical Books of the New Testament, Mr. Wardlaw subjoins these words; (p. 166;) "I earnestly wish my Unitarian friends, (for such I desire to esteem them as fellow men, although I cannot give them the right hand of fellowship as Christian brethren,) to consider this with becoming seriousness, and to beware;—and it is my fervent prayer, that others may be preserved from that fatal delusion, which it is my present object to expose; that they may be saved from treating with unseemly levity the word of the most High God, and may continue to approach it, as they approach to its Divine Author himself 'with reverence and godly fear.'"

This benevolent wish, when I first came to it, filled me with a sudden glow of gratitude, and I cordially joined in the spirit of Mr. Wardlaw's prayer, extending it to professed Christians of *both* the opposed denominations. For I apprehend, that both parties are chargeable with manifesting a culpable disrespect for the Bible, by being far too negligent in the study of its pages as well as in the practice of its precepts. But, whilst I confess with sorrow, that Unitarians do not in general apply to the Scriptures with sufficient diligence, humility, and seriousness, yet it is necessary for me to apprise the Reader, that Mr. Wardlaw's

language, where he speaks of their principles and practice upon this subject, is adapted to make a very false impression upon his mind.

Mr. Wardlaw not only represents the Unitarians as forcing the Scriptures by racks, and screws, and all the instruments of torture, to speak a language agreeable to their system, (p. 41. 65—68. 88. 141. 177,) but gives it out in numerous passages, that, after they have used the most arbitrary and reprehensible freedom in translating, they still pay very little regard to the authority of the sacred Authors. He affirms, (p. 106,) that "some of the leaders of Unitarianism have gone so very far as to charge the New Testament writers, and particularly the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with unappropriate applications of Scripture, far-fetched analogies, and bungled and inconclusive reasonings." He quotes a passage from Mr. Belsham, in which that author denies the doctrine of the Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures; and produces several extracts from Dr. Priestley's "History of Early Opinions," in which he advances it as his belief, that the sacred writers were not secure from errour, either with respect to facts or doctrines. Mr. Wardlaw also asserts, that *the adversaries of the Divinity and Atonement of Christ in general* entertain notions respecting the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures equally "vague and undefined;" that, "although they do not express themselves with the same decidedness, they are all characterised by a similar laxity of principle on this important point;" and that "they shake themselves loose of the Epistles with very little ceremony indeed." (p. 160—162.)

It would be an unfaithful desertion of the truth I have undertaken to defend, if I were to admit the candour, the fairness, or the justice of these statements. It it my duty to present the reader with more accurate information on

subjects, upon which Mr. Wardlaw has assumed such a bold and imperious tone of reprehension.

Whether the Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures be a doctrine of the Christian Religion, is one of those questions, upon which Unitarians are divided in opinion. It would therefore be inconsistent with my present design to enter into the discussion. But it is totally foreign from the inquiry concerning the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and the Divinity and Atonement of Christ. When Unitarians endeavour to show, that the Scriptures do not contain these doctrines, they always suppose their Divine Authority ; and, although, for the reason just stated, I do not espouse any particular hypothesis, yet I shall conduct all my arguments so as to make them agreeable to the highest supposition ever advanced, *viz.* that not only every *sentiment* but every *word* was dictated to the sacred penmen by the immediate suggestion of God. Upon this subject the sentiments of the Orthodox have, I believe, been no less at variance than those of Unitarians ; and, as Mr. Wardlaw has quoted a number of passages from Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham in order to convey to his readers an impression, that Unitarians in general deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, lest by the testimony of the Scriptures their tenets should be overthrown, so, if I chose to entangle converts by such an artifice, I might produce passages to the same effect from Jerome, Episcopius, Mr. William Lowth, and other eminent Trinitarians, to intimate that the advocates of the Orthodox system are reduced to the same necessity.

The intelligent reader is now apprised, with what skill and ingenuity Mr. Wardlaw has here applied that "*principle of selection*," which he professes to have employed for another purpose. *I* too shall select a few quotations, which may serve as a counterpart to his, and show what

degree of respect Unitarians have really entertained for the sacred Scriptures.

Whose was that great maxim, which Protestants have so often repeated with a noble indignation, in reply to the pretensions of the Church of Rome, "THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE ONLY, IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS ?" It is found in the writings of the ingenuous, the high-minded Chillingworth, who, having in the early part of his life wavered with a modest caution between different religious systems, at length settled in the doctrines of Socinianism. Whose was that other sentiment, which the Lovers of the Bible have so often cited with admiration and delight ? It was the sentiment of that bright ornament not merely of Unitarianism, but of mankind, the universally revered philosopher, Mr. Locke, who, when a relation inquired of him, what was the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain a true knowledge of the Christian Religion, returned this answer ; "*Let him study the Holy Scripture, especially in the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life.* IT HAS GOD FOR ITS AUTHOR ; SALVATION FOR ITS END ; AND TRUTH, WITHOUT ANY MIXTURE OF ERROUR, FOR ITS MATTER." If Mr. Wardlaw wished to give a true representation of the principles and practice of Unitarians, why did he not select such quotations as these, in addition to the passages of a different complexion ?

About one hundred and fifty years ago, some of the most learned Trinitarians confessed, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not founded on the Scriptures, but on *the tradition of the Church.* The Unitarians were then obliged to maintain, as a previous step to the establishment of their opinions, that the Scriptures are the only infallible rule whereby to determine religious controversies. "The *Socinians*," said they, "are of a contrary mind. Hath the Holy Scripture, that is, hath God, said it ? They will

believe, though all men and angels contradict it. They will always prefer the infinite wisdom of God, before the fallible dictates of human or angelick reason." Unitarian Tracts, v. I. No. 9. p. 4. printed in 1690. Those, who have the means of intimacy with Unitarians, know, that there are, and always have been, many individuals among them, who have been accustomed to spend days and nights with inexpressible satisfaction and delight in the study of the Sacred Volume. Those, who are versed in Theology, know, that the Expositions and Commentaries, written upon the Books of Scripture by Unitarians, are generally acknowledged, in those parts at least which have not a reference to the controverted doctrines, to possess extraordinary merit; and that the works, composed by Unitarians to vindicate the Scriptures against the objections of unbelievers, are singularly useful, clear, and convincing. Indeed, were it not for the labours of such men as Dr. Lardner and other learned Unitarian authors, we could scarcely be said to possess the Word of God at all. For it is upon the proofs, furnished and stated by these writers, that our assurance of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures now principally depends.*

* The ability and success, with which Unitarians have discussed the Evidences of Revelation, are admitted by Mr. Wardlaw in the following remarkable passage: "Many a time, after perusing treatises containing evidences of the Divine Authority of the Christian Religion, has the inquiry forcibly impressed itself on my mind, Of what advantage is all this to the Writer, if after all he has left the question *unanswered*, or *wrongly* answered, *What the Christian Religion is?* The outworks of Christianity have been often most ably and successfully defended, while that, which all these outworks have been reared by Providence to protect, and from the value of which consequently they derive their importance, has been either entirely overlooked, or most erroneously exhibited." (p. 369.)

Poor Dr. Lardner! He continued a reprobate, and is doomed to everlasting torment, though to him under Providence we in a great measure owe our Christianity! And, if such excellent men as he studied the

Notwithstanding the comparatively small number of the Unitarian denomination, I doubt whether the whole body of Orthodox Christians ever presented an example of more ardent and indefatigable zeal in the study of the Scriptures, than that of the able and upright Dr. Jebb, who, on account of his serious persuasion of the truth of Unitarianism, resigned the honours, the emoluments, and the hopes of a splendid and wealthy Establishment, and who, that he might qualify himself to understand better the language of the New Testament, committed to memory the whole of the Epistles of Paul in the original Greek.

When the learned Professor Griesbach, not many years ago, was preparing to present to the world an accurate edition of the New Testament, the only person in all Europe, who came forward to patronize this invaluable work, was a Unitarian. The expenses of the publication were defrayed, and copies of the new and correct edition of the Greek Testament liberally distributed, by a late illustrious

Evidences of Revelation so long, without ever perceiving the nature of the religion they were employed in defending, or deriving any advantage from their labours, what benefit is likely to accrue to the simple and the ignorant.

[Mr. Yates' expressions with regard to our obligations to Dr. Lardner, seem not to have been sufficiently weighed. He means, no doubt, principally to say, that the collection of ancient testimonies made by this great critick, is absolutely indispensable to the complete vindication of the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred writings. All Christians we suppose will readily assent to this position. Mr. Yates' words may be construed, however, to mean more than this, and to imply, that what was done by Dr. Lardner could have been done by no other man. But such a sentiment, if it was so intended, is surely hazarded too hastily; since the *materials* for such a work as the Credibility would still exist and might be used, however unlikely it may appear, that a man of such profound learning and admirable judgment and perfect ingenuousness would again be found to devote his life to so immense a labour.—Editor.]

nobleman,* who, having resigned the office of Prime Minister of the British Empire, was happily induced to direct his attention to the far more important business of his religious instruction and edification, and who, having by a most serious and diligent study of the Evidences and Doctrines of Christianity been converted to Unitarianism, declared, that he derived far more solid comfort and intense delight from meditating on its consolatory truths and acting upon its holy principles, than he had ever experienced in the former part of his life from the splendour of the Royal court and the influence of the most elevated rank and office.

I esteem it as an honourable instance of the regard paid to the Scriptures by certain individuals of the Unitarian persuasion, that they have lately attempted an Improved Version of the New Testament, the chief excellence of which they state to be, that it is translated from the correct edition of the original Greek, published by Dr. Griesbach. No candid Christian will deny, that the *endeavour* at least was laudable; but the censorious may easily find real or supposed defects in the execution of so difficult an undertaking, which they may make the subjects of indecent ridicule and severity.†

The last example, which I shall cite to refute the charge of a general disregard to the authority of the Scriptures

* The Duke of Grafton. See Belsham's Sermon on his Death, and Memoirs of Lindsey, ch. XI : also Griesbach's Preface to his Greek Testament.

[† For some farther observations on the "Improved Version," the reader may consult Part III. Chap. IX. of this volume. He will there see, how unjustly the whole body of Unitarians are made responsible for this work, the production of some individuals only, and freely and severely animadverted on by Unitarian, as well as other criticks. Its merits or defects, whatever they may be, have no proper connexion with the great doctrine discussed in this volume.—Editor.]

among Unitarians, is that of one of the most eminent English divines, Dr. John Taylor. This universally respected author was the Professor of Theology in the Dissenting Academy at Warrington, where many of the Unitarian ministers, now living, received their education. He always prefaced his Lectures with the following Charge addressed to his pupils, which may be considered as a fair representation of the views and sentiments usually maintained by Unitarians with respect to the pursuit of religious truth.

"I. I do solemnly charge you, in the name of the God of Truth, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and before whose judgment-seat you must in no long time appear, that in all your studies and inquiries of a religious nature, present or future, you do constantly, carefully, impartially, and conscientiously attend to evidence, as it lies in the Holy Scriptures, or in the nature of things, and the dictates of reason; cautiously guarding against the sallies of imagination, and the fallacy of ill-grounded conjecture.

"II. That you admit, embrace, or assent to no principle, or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only so far as it shall appear to you to be supported and justified by proper evidence from Revelation, or the reason of things.

"III. That, if at any time hereafter, any principle or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, shall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you to be dubious or false, you either suspect, or totally reject such principle or sentiment.

"IV. That you keep your mind always open to evidence.—That you labour to banish from your breast all prejudice, prepossession, and party-zeal.—That you study to live in peace and love with all your fellow Christians, and that you steadily assert for yourself, and freely allow

to others, the unalienable rights of judgment and conscience."

I have produced these instances, not for the sake of *boasting*, but as a necessary vindication of the Unitarian body. I repeat, that, although these are in general our *convictions*, our *endeavours*, and our *avowed principles*, we do not always go to the Holy Scriptures with those high feelings of veneration and gratitude, to which they are entitled, and that we do not study them with a degree of attention and assiduity proportioned to the inestimable importance of their contents. For myself, and for all, I confess, that in the discharge of *this*, as well as of every other duty, we are greatly deficient, and stand in need of the forgiveness and long-suffering of our merciful Father in heaven.

I should not be satisfied with myself, if I did not attempt likewise to do justice to the honoured, injured name of PRIESTLEY, whom Mr. Wardlaw treats throughout his volume (see particularly, p. 160—168. 175, 176) with marked disrespect, and upon whom in one passage (p. 176.) he animadverts "in the severest terms of reprehension." I shall not however plead the affectionate esteem of those, who adopted his sentiments, who partook of his cheerful, kind, and instructive conversation, and who knew from experience that gentleness and sweetness of manners in social intercourse, which sometimes converted into friends those, who had entertained the strongest prejudices against him on account of his religious opinions: it would be said, that such witnesses were evidently swayed *by sectarian prepossessions*. Nor shall I quote the high-wrought eulogies of foreign literati: for it would be replied, that these are the testimonies of *mere philosophers*. I shall quote the words of Christian Ministers, who differed from Dr. Priestley in religious sentiment, who had opportunities of

knowing his real character from living in his neighbourhood, and who from a strong sense of duty bore their testimony to his worth, when the popular fury was at its height against him.

Dr. Samuel Parr, in learning and intellectual attainments as well as in the virtues of the heart, probably the brightest ornament of the Established Church of England, has then stated in the following terms the proper mode of considering the merits of Dr. Priestley.

"Let Dr. Priestley, indeed, be confuted, where he is mistaken; let him be exposed, where he is superficial; let him be repressed, where he is dogmatical; let him be rebuked, where he is censorious. But let not his attainments be depreciated, because they are numerous, almost without a parallel. Let not his talents be ridiculed, because they are superlatively great. Let not his morals be vilified, because they are correct without austerity, and exemplary without ostentation; because they present, even to common observers, the innocence of a Hermit and the simplicity of a Patriarch, and because a philosophick eye will at once discover in them the deep-fixed root of virtuous principle, and the solid trunk of virtuous habit."—*Letter from Irenopolis to the Inhabitants of Eleutheropolis.*

Soon after the disgraceful riots at Birmingham, the Associated Dissenting Ministers of two neighbouring counties presented to Dr. Priestley an Address, expressive of their common concern at the horrid outrages, which he had sustained. I transcribe, below, its commencement. Alas for the man, who can read it without emotion!

"Address to the Rev. Dr. Priestley.

"Sir,

"We the dissenting ministers of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, of the Presbyterian, Independent, and Bap-

tist persuasions, associated as brethren and interested in the common cause of religious liberty, present our very respectful and affectionate condolence for the outrages to which you have been subject. Though many of us differ from you in matters of religious faith, we trust that we have better learnt the spirit of our excellent religion, than not to esteem in you that character of piety and virtue, which is the best fruit of every faith, and that ardour for truth and manly inquiry, which Christianity invites, and which no form of Christianity ought to shrink from; as well as to admire those eminent abilities, and that unwearied perseverance, which give activity to the virtues of your heart, and to which, in almost every walk of science, your country and the world have been so much indebted.

"That such virtues and such abilities should invite persecution, is a melancholy proof, that neither philosophy nor Christianity have yet taught their most dignified and amiable lessons to our country. But though man will feel, and your enemies have attacked you in that way wherein you feel perhaps most sensibly, yet we rejoice to find in you that decent magnanimity, that Christian bearing, which raises you superiour to suffering; and that a regard to God, to truth, and to another world, have even from the bosom of affliction enabled you to extract a generous consolation. Whether in your religious inquiries you have erred or no, we firmly believe, that truth and the best interests of mankind have been the object of your constant regard; and we trust, that that God, who loves an honest and well-meaning heart, will dispense to you such protection, as to his wisdom may seem most fit. To his benevolent and fatherly protection we devoutly recommend you through the remainder of your life; praying, that you may be long preserved, that you may survive the hatred of your ungrateful country, and that you may repay her cruel injuries by adding, as you have hitherto done, to her treasure of science, of virtue, and of piety.

"This tribute of our esteem and sympathy for you, Sir, we entreat you to receive with that regard, which we know the purity of it deserves; and, though not recommended by the rank of life we hold, we trust that you, a philosopher and a Christian, will think it not undeserving of a place among the very respectable testimonies of esteem and condolence, which both at home and abroad your merits and your sufferings have invited."

* * * * * * *

Signed by forty-three Ministers of the Three Denominations.

Dr. Priestley was characterised by a wonderful activity and energy of mind, the most open frankness and simplicity in the expression of his thoughts, and an undaunted earnestness in the pursuit of truth. These properties of his understanding, while they enabled him to make some important addition to almost every department of human knowledge, and to perceive the baselessness of some of the doctrines, in the firm belief of which he had been educated, perhaps led him to reject too hastily other opinions, which would have been retained by men of a less keen, ardent, and inquisitive disposition. It is a weakness of the human mind, that, when once released from the boundaries, within which it has been pent up by prejudice or education, like waters bursting through a high embankment, it is apt to run beyond the level, at which it would naturally subside by length of time or the absence of all restraint. I am disposed to think, that this great man allowed himself a freedom and boldness in speculation, which caused his inquiries to terminate in partial errour, and which might have produced serious evils in a mind less thoroughly imbued than his with virtuous principles and devotional habits. Those, who have not sufficient vigour of intellect to comprehend what is truly important in his doctrines,

exhaust their strength in petulant attacks upon the trivial errours of sentiment or expression, which they are able to select out of his hundred publications.

"Σοφος ὁ πολλα εἰδως φυᾳ.
" Μαθοντες δε, λαβροι
" Παγγλωσσια, κοραξ ὡς,
" Ακραντα γαρυεμεν,
" Διος προς ορνιχα θειον."

PIND. OL. II. 154—159.

" He only, in whose ample breast
" Nature hath true inherent genius pour'd,
" The praise of wisdom may contest;
" Not they, who, with loquacious learning stor'd,
" Like crows and chatt'ring jays, with clam'rous cries,
" Pursue the Bird of Jove, that sails along the skies."*

[* In these remarks on the respect to the Scriptures paid by Unitarians, Mr. Yates confines himself to the defence of that class of them, who are believers in the simple humanity of our Lord. Indeed the charge has scarcely, if at all, been extended to those who embrace higher views of his nature; certainly not by any one in any degree acquainted with their writings. The reproach on Humanitarians also has been almost wholly founded on a few passages in the writings of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, which nearly all who agree with them in other respects, would unite in censuring. How unjust then is it to ascribe the individual opinions of these gentlemen to all who think with them on the subject of the unity of God. The reformer Luther hastily styled the Epistle of St. James, *epistola chartacea, mere waste paper.* But what should we think of the candour of our Roman Catholick brethren, if they should found on this sentiment of that great man, a charge against all Protestants of a similar contempt of that portion of Scripture?

It is very desirable in this, as in every inquiry, that we should separate the true question in debate from every subject not necessarily connected with it. The controversy, with respect to the nature and degree of the inspiration of the sacred records, has no peculiar bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity. All Unitarians would cheerfully leave the cause to be decided on the ground which Mr. Yates has taken, p. 19. They would esteem themselves but too happy, if the determination of the question, whether there is *one* Supreme Object of worship,

or *three* Supreme Objects of worship, should be left to the clear and simple language of the Bible, explained by *any* consistent laws of interpretation —The question of inspiration belongs in truth to the Deistical controversy. Those, who maintain that the sacred writers, in recording the facts and instructions of which they were divinely informed, were left to the use of their own language, and to the influence of their own mental peculiarities, take this ground *solely* because they believe, that the sacred authority of the Scriptures cannot otherwise be defended. They think, that the modes of quotation, the varieties of phraseology in narrating the same fact, the circumstantial discrepances, the rhetorical and even grammatical inaccuracies, together with the striking peculiarities of style, which every one discerns in the different writers of the New Testament, can be satisfactorily explained on no other theory. They believe that the contrary supposition encumbers the defence of Christianity with insuperable difficulties, while their own even lends new strength to it. They affirm that the sacred writers no where, either explicitly or impliedly, lay claim to any higher inspiration, than consists in an exemption from errour in the facts and doctrines which they deliver as the mind of Christ. For this a plenary verbal explanation seems in no degree required. Indeed if it were necessary that a miracle should be wrought to suggest each word to the *writer*, it is equally necessary that every *reader* should also be inspired; or otherwise the miracle would be rendered useless by the inherent defects of all human language. Besides, if it were necessary that every word should be given originally by a miracle, does not the same necessity exist, that it should be preserved by a miracle, unaltered by errour or negligence, in subsequent ages? Might we not therefore expect that the pen of every *transcriber* would be supernaturally guided, as indeed the Jews fondly, yet consistently, believed of their sacred writings, till the modern collation of Hebrew Manuscripts undeceived them? It is by these and similar arguments, that some of the truest and best Christians have justified their doubts of the common opinion of the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Whether solid or not, it is evident that their arguments *proceed from their reverence* to the Bible, and their desire that the evidence of its sacred authority may be relieved of every objection. They doubtless may be wrong in their opinions; but it would be better to answer their arguments than to impeach their motives. At all events, their errours have nothing to do with the question of the Trinity, and it is only a very ungenerous *argumentum ad invidiam* to introduce them into this discussion.—Editor.]

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PROPER METHOD OF ASCERTAINING THE SENSE OF SCRIPTURE.

EVERY person of sober reflection will allow, that, besides maintaining in all our inquiries after religious truth a meek, teachable, and pious disposition, we ought also to exercise diligence and discretion in the use of proper means for ascertaining the sense of the Scriptures. I propose in this chapter briefly to explain the principles, which, I conceive, will be adopted by all, who, instead of aiming to support a favourite system, to feed the cravings of a restless imagination, or to serve their temporal interests, simply ask, What saith the Scripture?

Whenever we wish to determine with accuracy the sense of any portion of the New Testament, (for to the *New* I shall chiefly apply my remarks,) three particulars claim our attention; 1st, the correctness of the Greek text; 2ndly, the mode of translating it into English; and 3dly, the mode of interpreting that translation.

I. In the first place, it is obviously necessary, that we should know what Greek words were originally written in the passage under consideration.

The manuscripts and printed editions of the Greek Testament differ from one another in numerous passages, and these differences are sometimes of great importance. But it is plain, that the passage can have been written in one way only the Apostle, from whose pen it proceeded. It is therefore the object of the impartial critick to ascertain the genuine reading by consulting ancient manuscripts, versions, and commentaries. In doing this he is guided by strict *rules*, which are acknowledged by all learned men of what-

ever religious sentiments, and which have been adopted from an impartial consideration of the circumstances of the case, and not to support the principles of any sect or party. If therefore he is obliged, in conformity to these rules, to reject one reading and to adopt another, his decision does not arise from any desire to advance the progress of his own private opinions, but results from the uniform application of those rules, by which alone the writings of the New Testament can be restored to their original uncorruptness. It is of importance to observe this circumstance, because, when Unitarians reply to an argument by saying, that the passage in the original has been corrupted, ignorant persons always suspect, that they make arbitrary alterations in the Sacred Text merely to suit their system. In this groundless suspicion they are sometimes countenanced by those, who ought to teach them better. Dr. Jamieson of Edinburgh, in his learned History of the Culdees, (p, 93,) answering some author, (Bp. Lloyd,) who had obviated the argument arising from the occurrence of a certain phrase in another author by saying, that *that phrase was perhaps inserted into the later copies*, remarks, "This however forcibly reminds one of the Socinian mode of reasoning. It is well known, that, when writers of this class are much puzzled with any passage of Scripture, which opposes their system, they raise the cry of interpolation." Concerning the *manner*, in which this assertion is made, I restrain myself. But its complete falsehood I must notice, because the progress of Unitarianism, as its adversaries clearly foresee, depends in a great measure upon the credit of the more learned Unitarians for fidelity in criticising and translating the original Scriptures.

Some learned men in our own country, and many more upon the continent, have exerted themselves with great acuteness and a most laudable assiduity in collecting, pub-

lishing, and comparing the Various Readings of the Greek Testament. Above all, the Christian world is indebted to the learned, impartial, and indefatigable Dr. Griesbach, late Professor of Theology in the University of Jena, who devoted almost his whole life and talents to the correction of the text, and, as the result of his labours, published an edition of the Greek Testament, restored nearly to its primitive incorruption, and accompanied by a view of the various readings contained in other printed editions, and in the ancient manuscripts, versions, and commentaries. This edition has been already reprinted many times, and in various parts of the world, and is at present received every where by the learned as the standard text of the Christian Scriptures. Dr. Marsh, a Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and by far the most learned theologian in our nation, says, that "Griesbach has admitted critical conjecture in no instance whatsoever, and, where he has expunged, corrected, or added, the evidence, (which he has accurately produced,) is in point of authority three and four-fold in his favour." (Marsh's Michaelis, ch. XII. sec. 3. note 2.) Since Professor Griesbach was a Trinitarian, it cannot be supposed, that he was influenced in his decisions by any desire to favour the opposite doctrines; and yet he was so perfectly impartial, that the Unitarians pay profound deference to his judgment, and see no reason to charge him with an undue attachment to those readings of the text, which seem favourable to the Orthodox system.*

* For an excellent account of the life and labours of Griesbach, see the Monthly Repository, v. III. p. 1—9. A late number of the Monthly Review, (see appendix to vol. LXXIII,) contains the following account of the critical celebrity of Griesbach, in the review of a German work on Greek literature.

"A melancholy tribute of gratitude and admiration, which every critical student of the Scriptures will re-echo, is paid at the close of

After giving this short account of Griesbach's edition, I scarcely need say, that I uniformly follow it, and could not without great arrogance question the propriety of any alteration, which this most learned, judicious, and impartial critick has sanctioned with his decisive authority. But I say more: I maintain, that every minister, who pretends to a *critical* acquaintance with the Scriptures, and who is not either timorously insincere or highly presumptuous, will make use of this edition in preference to any other; because this contains the books of the New Testament, as nearly as can now with certainty be ascertained, in the state in which they proceeded from the Apostles and Evangelists, whereas into the editions, formerly used, interpolations and corruptions are occasionally introduced. Those who believe, that the *words*, as well as the *sentiments* of the sacred writers, were suggested to them by immediate inspiration, ought on that account only to hold this edition in greater reverence.

Mr. Wardlaw justly remarks, that, "in making our appeal to the Scriptures, we should beware on all occasions of secretly indulging *a wish* to discover any part of them, however small, to be spurious," (p. 171.) and he utters the most solemn warnings against "wresting the Scriptures," or "applying them to purposes, which they were not designed to serve," so as "to impute to the Author of Truth sentiments contrary to what he meant to express," and to fix "the seal of Heaven on falsehood and forgery."

the Preface to the memory of the learned Griesbach, who lately died at Jena, in which university he was the most eminent professor. His profound comparative knowledge of manuscripts and editions, and the singular sagacity and impartiality of his verbal criticism, have given to his text of the Christian canon an oracular value. The orthodox and the heretick bow alike to the unprejudiced indifference of his dogmatism; and, where inspiration appears not to guide, Griesbach is now allowed to determine."

(p. 34.) But it should be observed, that, besides wishing a genuine expression to be spurious, a person, interested in the support of a system, may also wish *a spurious expression to be genuine*, and that it is not more wicked and profane to misapply a genuine portion of the word of God, than to produce as an uncorrupted passage of Scripture, what is only accounted such in the estimation of the uninformed.

Concerning the variations in the text of Griesbach, which relate to the Divinity of Christ, Mr. Wardlaw addresses his hearers in the following terms; p. 146, 147.

"Of all the texts, then, in the New Testament, to which I have directed your attention on this interesting topick, how many are there, do you suppose, which undergo any alteration in the text of GRIESBACH, the most recent, and, on all hands, acknowledged the most perfect?—You will be surprised, perhaps,—especially any of you who may have been in the way of hearing Griesbach so often and so triumphantly appealed to, as he usually is by our opponents,—when I assure you that there is NOT ONE:—that not a single text of all that have been quoted is in the slightest degree touched by this high and vaunted authority!"

"The fact as to this matter stands as follows.—There are *three texts* connected with the present subject which this eminent critick sets aside: namely, 1 John v. 7. 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one:—Acts xx. 28. Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood:'—and, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.'—The first of these texts is rejected as entirely an interpolation. In the second, the reading 'the church of *the Lord*' is preferred, on a preponderance of authorities, to the reading of the received text, 'the church of God.' In the third, 'God was manifest in the flesh' gives place to '*He who* was

manifested in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit, &c.' Now to no one of these three passages have I referred, in proof of the doctrine which it has been my object to establish."

In this passage Mr. Wardlaw acknowledges, that the text of Griesbach is "the most perfect," accompanying his confession however with an angry sneer, which shows that he ill endures to see the implicit deference paid to the decisions of Griesbach by competent judges of all parties, and will never forgive him for having, in obstinate conformity to his stupid Rules, thrown down three main pillars of the Trinitarian system.

But, besides the *spirit* of this passage, I have some fault to find with its *accuracy*.

In pages 41, 85, 86, 136, that is, five several times, Mr. Wardlaw has quoted to prove the Divinity of Christ, Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." But the verse, as corrected by Griesbach, reads thus; "I am Alpha and Omega, saith *the Lord God*, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." The emendation is of considerable importance, because it determines completely the reference of the passage to God, and not to Jesus Christ. Yet Mr. Wardlaw affirms, that "not a single text of all that have been quoted is *in the slightest degree touched* by this high and vaunted authority!"

In page 40, he has quoted among his specimens of the "current language of the New Testament," 1 Tim. iii. 16. "God was manifested in the flesh." In page 33, the same expression is brought forward, and marked as a quotation. In page 1?', the phrase is again produced, and, though not marked with inverted commas, would impress his *hearers* at least, if not his *readers*, with the force of a familiar passage of Scripture. Yet Mr. Wardlaw affirms of this passage together with the other two set aside by Griesbach, "Now to

no one of these three passages have I referred in proof of the doctrine, which it has been my object to establish."

If our friend had detected such inaccuracies in the work of any Unitarian, they would have afforded an occasion for a loud and long *Carmen Triumphale*, followed by grave admonitions against *dishonesty* and "impressing the seal of Heaven on falsehood and forgery." I believe, however, that these mistakes have arisen from *mere carelessness*, though carelessness is not easily excusable in one, who is writing on such important subjects and with such imposing solemnity.

II. After it has been determined, how a passage was originally written by its inspired author, the next inquiry relates to the proper mode of translating it into English.

The translation of the Bible, now in use, is sufficiently accurate for common purposes; its impressive and venerable diction will probably never be excelled; and, considering that it was made more than two hundred years from the present time, when the criticism of the Scriptures was in its infancy, it is highly creditable both to the talents and to the candour of its authors. Nevertheless it ought to be remembered, that the forty-seven gentlemen, employed to make it by King James, were not miraculously inspired. They were fallible men, and it is acknowledged by persons of all sects, that in many instances they have failed. Mr. Wardlaw occasionally objects to their translation in the most decided terms, (see particularly, p. 101. 71. 85. 338. 186. 38. 116.)* and I think it probable that, in all that I shall hereafter advance to disprove the Trinitarian system, I shall not depart from the Authorised version in a greater number of instances than my opponent.

Although many persons in the common walks of life may be obliged to confine their attention to this translation, yet it

[* Also 298. 351. 425. English ed.]

is obviously the duty of the ministers of religion to go to the fountain-head, not to trust to this or any other imperfect Version, but to bestow their labour upon the Greek Original, and with this view to make themselves acquainted both with the languages of the Classical Writers of Greece and Rome, and with the idioms of the Oriental tongues.

He, who is inquiring into the sense of a particular passage, will do well to examine how it has been rendered by former translators. He ought however to be careful, that he does not neglect to exercise his own judgment, out of servile deference to the opinions of others. Still more should he be upon his guard against translating a passage merely in accommodation to his preconceived ideas. Let him be guided by the rules of grammar, and the meanings which are given to words in the best lexicons. Thus he may produce in English an exact representation of what the inspired author has written in Greek. But if, disdaining the dull employment of searching through dictionaries and applying the rules of grammar, he satisfies himself with any translation, that pleases his fancy or supports his system, he forces the Scriptures to speak the language of his creed, instead of making his creed conformable to the real assertions of the Scriptures.

It however sometimes happens, that the original admits of being translated in two different ways. In this case, it becomes the student to bear both of the translations in his mind, and to desist from making a choice between them, until he has learned the doctrine of the Scriptures from other unambiguous passages. It is then allowable to adopt, as expressive of the true sense of the original, that translation, which is agreeable to the sentiments clearly laid down in other parts of Scripture. But it is evident, that a passage in these circumstances cannot with propriety be adduced as a proof of any doctrine.

III. Let us now suppose, that the student of the Scriptures has translated accurately into English a genuine and uncorrupted passage of the New Testament. The next inquiry relates to the mode of interpreting that translation. Here it is that our judgment is in the greatest danger of being warped by prejudice, because here we cannot be guided by such strict rules of criticism as in the two former branches of inquiry. When it is our object to explain an English translation, we ought to be especially on our guard against using the system, which we have adopted, as a key to discover the sense of the passage. For daily observation shows, that a man, who is wedded to a certain set of opinions, accustoms himself to find those opinions, whatever they are, in every page of the Bible; according to which loose and fanciful plan of interpretation the Scriptures may be made to express an infinite variety of meanings, or, what is the same thing, to have no meaning at all. The principles of interpretation which I shall now briefly mention, are such as no reflecting person will dispute.

In considering the sense of any passage we should first inquire, whether the words may not be taken in their literal and primary acceptation. A literal explanation of a passage is always to be preferred, until some good reason is assigned for departing from it. Nevertheless it is evident to all, and it is acknowledged by persons of every sect, that in numberless instances the words of Scripture are to be understood figuratively. Where therefore we meet with a passage, which, if literally explained, would be a manifest violation of common sense, or directly contradict what is asserted in other parts of the Bible, we must conclude that the words are not to be taken in their primary signification. To determine the true sense, we must examine other passages, where the same forms of expression occur, and where persons of all parties agree to interpret them in

the same way. By employing the plainer and undisputed passages as guides to the interpretation of those which are obscure, we may discover the true sense of all.

Instead of having recourse to these severe and unaccommodating rules, it is very common with Trinitarians to adopt without further inquiry any explanations, which excite their feelings or please their fancy. To this convenient and captivating, but licentious and unprincipled method of interpretation Mr. Wardlaw has in many instances given the sanction of his example, not considering, that the meaning which appears to him grand, interesting, and even obvious, may thus strike his mind only because it falls in with his preconceived opinions. To him and to all who argue after such a manner, I would put this serious question; "Do you evince any of that reverence for the Scriptures and that holy thirst after divine truth, with the want of which you so liberally charge Unitarians, if, in comparing different interpretations of Scripture, you do not make it your object merely to detect those which are false, but discard all which you think frigid, poor, and tame. I cannot but consider such a conduct as indicative of an understanding, which has little relish for clear simple truths, and is therefore always longing for awful mysteries, and seeking for something to rouse the feelings and amuse the imagination in proportion as it offends the judgment. I am happy to think that Unitarians study the Scriptures with different views. Instead of endeavouring to find in every page of the Bible something grand and astonishing, we only search for what is true; we inquire what is the strict and grammatical sense of the passage before us; we thus endeavour to find out what has actually been taught to mankind by the inspired prophets and apostles; and then, instead of complaining that the doctrines of the New Testament are too mean to be the subjects of a divine revelation, and at-

tempting to adorn and aggrandize the simplicity that is in Christ, we take the Gospel as we find it, and are thankful." On the same ground I object to the seducing *warmth of persuasion*, in which Mr. Wardlaw uniformly clothes his arguments concerning the sense of the Scriptures. "Believing," says he, "the doctrine" of the Divinity of Christ "to comprehend within itself all the hopes of a guilty and perishing world, while I would contend *meekly*, I must be pardoned, if at the same time I contend *earnestly*. It is not a subject for that speculative, cold-hearted indifference, which is falsely esteemed by some essential to freedom from prejudice." (p. 154.) No candid reader will deny, that Mr. Wardlaw's ardent concern for the general reception of a doctrine, which he thinks requisite to the salvation of mankind, is in itself commendable; but he forgets, that, if he does not *in the first place* inform himself by calm, diligent, and accurate investigation, What is Truth, his earnestness of contention may only be exerted in favour of established errours, and thus counteract his own benevolent intentions. When I consider how apt we are, in the discussion of controverted doctrines, to be betrayed into unchristian animosity, to overrate our own arguments and undervalue those of our opponents, and to flatter ourselves that we are cherishing a devout regard to the glory of God and the salvation of men, when in fact we are only offering incense to our own vanity, by giving full play to that spiritual pride and sectarian reserve, which often mingle even with our best affections, I must profess myself a decided advocate for that temper of cool, patient, and impartial inquiry, which Mr. Wardlaw condemns under the name of "cold-hearted indifference." It shall be my endeavour accordingly in the following work to employ all the diligence and accuracy, of which I am capable, in determining the true sense of every disputed passage, and then to deliver

a dry critical opinion, stating the grounds of that opinion so far as they can be made intelligible to English readers. I wish also, that, whenever any difficulty comes in my way, I may have the candour to acknowledge it, and that, whenever I am in doubt or see reason to retract an opinion formerly stated, I may have the honesty to confess it.

But, although *this* kind of indifference is absolutely requisite in the *investigation* of religious truth, yet, when the truth is once discovered, when the controversy is terminated, then let fervent enthusiasm apply the theory to practice; then let generous unabated zeal employ the weapons of divine truth to subdue the powers of sin and darkness; then let the eloquent tongue express all the tender and kind emotions of the bleeding heart; then adopt the penetrating all-powerful rhetorick of Paul, "I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping."

I have thus endeavoured to illustrate the three objects of inquiry, which will engage the attention of every one, who sincerely desires to learn from the New Testament the invaluable doctrines of the Christian Revelation. I am aware of an objection, which will occur to every reader, *viz.* that the two former topicks, relating to the accuracy of the Greek text and the mode of translating it into English, are beyond the reach of the majority of Christians. This is undoubtedly the case. When a correct English translation is supplied, all are able to judge of its meaning; but to furnish the translation requires not only an intimate acquaintance with the ancient languages, but a considerable knowledge of the principles of criticism. They, who have not these acquisitions, must necessarily trust for information to the diligence and impartiality of those, who have laboured to obtain them. To communicate information of this kind, I consider as one of the most important duties, which the Minister of Religion owes to his flock. Being unable

to examine the original Scriptures themselves, they confidently look up to him, as one whose education and leisure should qualify him for the office, to tell them where the common version of the Scriptures is defective. Every minister, who values religious truth himself, who is desirous of imparting it to others, and who is sensible of the awful importance of the duties imposed upon him, will not neglect either to furnish himself with the means of judging upon these subjects, or to communicate to his hearers the knowledge, which he has obtained. In particular, no minister of worth and veracity will produce as a proof of a popular doctrine a passage, which he knows to be incorrectly represented in the common translation of the Scriptures. If a publick teacher of religion, without giving any intimation that the genuineness of the passage is disapproved or disputed, brings forward such a verse, for example, as that falsely attributed to St. John, "There are three, that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one;" or such an expression as that falsely attributed to Paul, "God was manifest in the flesh;" he not only evinces little regard to the Sacred Scriptures, by preferring the mistakes of careless transcribers and the corruptions of nefarious monks to the genuine words of the inspired Apostles, but he is guilty of a shameful imposture in withholding that knowledge, which he is bound in honesty to communicate. With respect therefore to these preliminary topicks of inquiry, it becomes the ministers of religion to be industrious in informing themselves, and open and candid in instructing their congregations. Those, who do not understand the art of criticism and the original languages of Scripture, must rely upon their diligence and integrity. But, at the same time, they should remember, that, when a correct translation of a genuine text is placed before them, they are probably as well able to *interpret* it as their ministers.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE PROPRIETY OF BELIEVING IN MYSTERI

BEFORE any religion can be received as divine, it must be proved, or at least supposed, to contain nothing, which is previously known to be false, absurd, and impossible. We believe in Revelation, because the evidences, which show it to be from God, far outweigh the objections, which may be advanced to evince its earthly origin. But, supposing its doctrines to be irrational, this single circumstance would annul the whole body of evidence in its favour, and prove that it is not Revelation. Accordingly those authors, who have stated the evidences of the Christian faith, have in general laid it down as an axiom, that even miracles cannot establish a doctrine, which is in itself absurd, which is contrary to known facts, to the fundamental articles of Natural Religion, or to other doctrines of the same pretended revelation.* If therefore by *mysteries* be intended such assertions as these, we could not, and ought not, to believe them, even though they were plainly stated in the Bible. For the testimony of the Scriptures would not prove them to be true; on the contrary, they would prove the Scriptures to be false. To what is here alleged, Mr. Wardlaw gives his assent. "It is true," says he, "that the contents of this book

* See, for example, Clarke's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture, Part II. § 14. Bentley's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture, Sermon I. p. 19, 20. Leland's Answer to Tindal, Part II. ch. 1. Tillotson's Sermons, No. 177, v. III. p. 513. 535, folio. Campbell on Miracles, p. 60—62. Doddridge's Lectures, p. 231—236. Butler's Analogy, Part II. ch. 3.—Gerard's Dissertations, p. 102. Chandler on Miracles, ch. III. § 3. p. 92—95. Sykes on Miracles, p. 11. 23. Watts' Logick, Part II. ch. 5. § 6.

ought to be examined, as forming what has been called the internal evidence of its divine authority. If it could be shown to contain what was clearly contradictory, the discovery would be a proof, sufficiently convincing, of its not being from God." (p. 24.) Let it be remembered, then, that even the clearest declarations of the Scriptures would not authorize us to believe in Mysteries, if mysteries be propositions, which directly contradict first principles, known facts, or indisputable truths.

But, besides being applied to doctrines, which are understood and seen to be absurd, the term *Mystery* is also used to denote those, which cannot be understood, and which therefore, without the testimony of Revelation, cannot possibly be proved to be either false or reasonable. In this sense the word appears to be employed by Mr. Wardlaw. He defines a Mystery to be "*something, that is either difficult to be conceived, or entirely incomprehensible.*" (p. 19.) I propose the following definition as more exact, and also better accommodated to the general tenour of Mr. Wardlaw's reasoning and language: *A Mystery is a proposition, to the terms of which no distinct ideas are annexed.*

In all the regions of nature there are departments of knowledge, clear and open to the Divine Mind, and probably to orders of intelligent beings intermediate between him and us, but into which we have at the utmost only a glimpse, which are to us either invisible or but dimly seen. Among our own species also many individuals enjoy the most distinct and full apprehension of subjects, with which the rest of mankind are very imperfectly acquainted. On all these subjects truths may be enunciated, so far as human language is adapted to convey them, which to inferiour minds will appear difficult to be conceived or entirely incomprehensible. Nothing therefore can be more unrea-

sonable, than absolutely to deny a proposition, because we attach no distinct conceptions to the terms, in which it is expressed.

Our present inquiry is, On what grounds ought we to yield our assent to such propositions ?

To me it appears evident, that our belief must arise solely from implicit reliance upon the *Authority* which declares them. A man, for example, may announce something to me in an unknown tongue ; and, being assured of his general veracity, I may believe that he speaks the truth, and give my assent. Or a person may enunciate a proposition, having a relation to the doctrine of Porisms, the Philosophy of Kant, or some other topick foreign from my studies ; and knowing him to be well-informed upon the subject, I may be convinced that his assertion is true, without connecting any ideas with the words employed. And, in like manner, a Prophet, who proves his divine commission by miracles, may announce a doctrine in terms, to which I annex no distinct conceptions ; yet I may believe that the prophet does, that angels and superiour spirits may, that I myself may in a more advanced stage of my existence ; in deference therefore to his Divine authority, I would yield my humble and entire assent.

But concerning propositions thus circumstanced, I would submit the following remarks to the consideration of the candid reader.

1. In the first place, it appears scarcely possible, that a blind assent to an unintelligible proposition can be of any use in the regulation of the conduct, the amendment of the heart, or the alleviation of distress. Whatever force is attributed to Mr. Wardlaw's observations on the unavoidable difficulty of conceiving the *manner* of the Divine existence, and the consequent propriety of believing any mysteries upon this subject declared in Scripture, it must

be allowed, that there is great force in the following remarks of one of the best divines, whose works enrich the English Library. "If," observes Dr. James Foster, "you say that you cannot account for the *manner* of God's creating the world, or for the *manner* in which he exists every where, for the general resurrection, and the like, I answer, *It is no part of your religion to account for it.* WHERE THE MYSTERY BEGINS, RELIGION ENDS.—Mysteries yield neither *pleasure*, nor *profit*. For, as with respect to the works of nature, all our pleasure arises from the *perception* of beauty, harmony, and usefulness; and, however we may imagine innumerable *secret* beauties, which we have not discovered, yet, till they are *known*, they afford no real satisfaction, nor can we reap any advantage from them; 'tis just the same with respect to mysteries in religion; we can neither be delighted nor profited by them, because we don't *understand* them.—The utmost that can be said is, that we are *confounded and puzzled.* And is there any pleasure in that, or any advantage merely *in being in the dark, and having no ideas?*"

2. A second observation, which I would make upon this subject is, that, if an incomprehensible proposition be inculcated in Scripture as an article of implicit faith, it must be delivered *in the very terms of the proposition.* We cannot prove such a proposition by *inferences;* for all *reasoning* is out of the question. We cannot show its accordance with the *ideas* suggested by Scripture phrases; for, on such a subject, *we have no ideas at all;* at least, *our conceptions being indistinct*, every step we take is an insecure, a random, a desperate movement.

Mr. Wardlaw (p. 22, 23.) argues admirably upon the difference between things above reason and things contrary to reason, observing, that, if a doctrine be *above reason*, "on this very account it seems impossible to prove it

contrary to reason." "Unless," says he, "we have *some notion* of the thing itself, on what principle can we possibly make out the contrariety?" Undoubtedly, if any assertion be utterly unintelligible to us, from the very nature of the case we cannot prove its *falsehood.* But it is equally impossible for us *by any argument* to prove its *truth.* We can only repeat the assertion in the very terms, in which we hear it stated, and say, We believe that assertion to be true.

I may affirm, for example, in the hearing of a man ignorant of Mathematicks, that "The Ellipse is one of the Conick Sections." To these words he annexes no distinct conceptions. The proposition is to him a mystery. He cannot therefore *prove it to be false;* but neither can he *prove it to be true.* If he gives his assent, it is purely through confidence in my veracity and superiour information.

In like manner, we cannot by any deductions from Scripture phrases prove the truth of a proposition, which conveys to us no distinct ideas. If such a proposition be contained in the Bible, we may repeat its exact words, and say, that we believe it to be true, because we believe every part of the Bible to be true. But we can say or do nothing more. In no other way can the testimony of the Scriptures be of any avail to prove the truth of the proposition.*

[*These observations are very important, and might perhaps be pursued somewhat further. It might be shown not only that a proposition, unintelligible in any of its terms, cannot be safely collected by way of *inference* from Scripture phrases; but that it could be converted to no practical purpose, even if it were ever so formally laid down. It must be incapable of any application and barren of any consequences. We could not connect such a proposition with any other. We could not draw any inferences from it. We could not convert it

3. In the third place, we may ask respecting propositions, to the terms of which we annex no clear conceptions, Is it proper to give to such propositions the name of *Revelation ?*

to any purposes of doctrine or practice. For by the supposition there are one or more terms of the proposition, which convey no intelligible idea to the mind; which relate to what reason in none of its operations can at all conceive of; in regard to which therefore it can lend us no aid. The duty of reason is then nothing more than profound, humble, absolute silence. So long as any term of the proposition is unintelligible, we can never be sure that it may not contain some idea, incompatible with any application of it, which reason can make. As to all practical purposes, therefore, it must be to us as though it did not exist; except when we quote it in *exactly the same form* and in *exactly the same connexion* in which it originally stood.

The doctrine of the Trinity is professedly wholly above human reason. She could never have discovered it to us and she can never now in any degree explain it to us. What we know of it we know only from the Scriptures, and they do not afford us any assistance in understanding in what sense it is to be understood. We ought to take it therefore exactly as it is given us, neither more definitely nor less definitely, and without presuming to supply or modify any thing with respect to it.— We must receive it *in the very words* in which it is revealed; nay, those terms which are unintelligible, if there are any such, should be preserved in their original Greek; for how can that be translated to which we can attach no intelligible signification? These seem to be fair consequences from the principles of our Trinitarian brethren. We say then to them, produce to us any passage of Scripture which contains the doctrine of the Trinity, and we will give to every word of it our most unfeigned respect and acquiescence. Show us a *single* example of doxology to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and you shall hear it from our mouths as often as from your own. Tell us where to find *one* instance of the phrase *God the Son*, or *God the Holy Ghost*, and you will never hear another objection to it from us. Present to us what you call the doctrine of the Trinity in *any* form in which you truly find it in any passage of the Scriptures, and then reproach us if we do not cheerfully receive it exactly in that form. On this ground Christians of every name might

To *reveal*, as the word itself denotes, is to *disclose* what was concealed, to *make known* what was covered, to *throw light* upon what was obscure. Is it not then incorrect to say, that God *reveals* a truth to us, when that truth is expressed in terms, to which we attach no distinct ideas, and when it is impossible that human language could have supplied any clearer form of expression ?

Mr. Wardlaw (p. 21, 22.) strongly exposes the presumption of being *startled* and *offended*, " because in what God reveals concerning his own infinite nature, we find something which we cannot understand." But, who is offended at this ? For the light vouchsafed to us, for the truths unfolded, we are thankful ; we do not complain, because our knowledge after all is very limited. But we think it evident, that subjects, which we cannot understand or comprehend, *to us are not revealed*. Mr. Wardlaw attributes this objection to *pride :* " In pride, in reas'ning pride, our errour lies." And I confess it may be so. Notwithstanding, therefore, the apparent force of these observations, I would still maintain a humble conviction,

meet. The purity of our worship would be secured by using only the very language of the sacred writers in our ascriptions, and this most unhappy contention might be forgotten.

But the believers of the Trinity decline this proposal. They are not satisfied with any form of their doctrine, which they find in the Scriptures. Now this can be explained only by one of two propositions. Either they are conscious that no proposition which expresses it exists in the Bible, or else they think that they can state the doctrine *better* than it is there expressed. The first supposition is undoubtedly the true one. But if it were not, all the remarks just made on the impropriety of *using reason to state or apply a proposition, which reason can in no degree comprehend*, seem to apply with great force. We forbear to speak in in this connexion of the temerity of being " wise above that which is written" on a subject confessedly so high and mysterious, or to inquire on which side the real reverence for the Scriptures is displayed. Edit.]

that my understanding is weak and deceitful, and hence I am prepared to admit the truth of any unintelligible proposition, which is supported by the authority of Scripture.

It is usual with Trinitarians to answer the objections against the mysteriousness of their principal tenets by saying, that there is mystery in every thing around us. I have already stated the fact, which it would be the height of presumption to deny, that concerning every class of beings there are truths, clear to superiour intelligences, though seen indistinctly, or not at all, by us. I have no objection therefore to those just representations of the feebleness and limitation of the human faculties, which are adapted to teach us candour and indulgence for the errours of others, and modesty, humility, and caution in forming our own opinions. But I must protest against those desolating pleas for religious mystery, which tend to sap the foundations of all human knowledge, and to introduce an irksome skepticism upon every subject. Mr. Wardlaw (p. 19.) intimates, that, if we make it a rule to understand the terms of a proposition before believing it, we must abandon "some of the fundamental truths even of Natural Religion." Hume himself went scarcely farther.* When such sentiments are advanced, the contest is not about a few disputed outworks of the Christian system; the whole fabrick of religion totters; to prevent its very foundations from giving way, we are bound by all the humane and all the pious obligations to assert, that upon the *primary truths* of religion our ideas may by proper attention become clear

* See Hume's "Dialogues on Natural Religion;" which demonstrate that Orthodoxy and Skepticism are raised upon the very same basis, *viz.* the alleged indistinctness of our ideas upon all subjects, and especially upon matters of religion.

and certain, and that it is only upon subjects *of subordinate consequence* that we are left in obscurity.

As an example of his maxim, that we cannot always understand even the fundamental truths of Natural Religion, Mr. Wardlaw produces the attribute of Omnipresence. (p. 19, 32, 130.) He affirms, that we use the expression, "God is here," and say "that he is at the same moment equally present in the remotest part of the universe," without annexing to these words any distinct ideas. "Have we," he asks, "ever endeavoured to analyze *the conceptions, which these modes of expression appear to convey?* Is God," he continues, "*a spiritual substance, infinitely extended?* Against this notion of infinite extension there have been advanced powerful, perhaps insurmountable, objections; and the truth is, that, if we imagine we possess *any conception at all of the mode of the Divine omnipresence* and omniscience, we greatly deceive ourselves." Thus Mr. Wardlaw appears to me to renounce his belief in the Divine omnipresence. Theologians, in treating upon this subject, have made a distinction between the *virtual*, and the *actual* omnipresence of God. His *virtual* omnipresence is the attribute, by which he is able to *produce effects* in every part of space. His *actual* omnipresence is *the extension of his substance* through every part of space. The former Mr. Wardlaw appears to allow, but to deny the latter. But in the latter, as well as the former, all sound theists believe. The notion of *a spiritual substance infinitely extended* is too *vast* to be fully embraced by our understandings. It is however a *clear and distinct* idea, nor is there any force in the objections urged against it.

The true state of the case with respect to our knowledge of all the Divine Attributes is, that we may obtain *clear* ideas of their *nature*, although we cannot form *adequate* conceptions of their *extent*. Astronomers teach us, that

the distance between the earth and the sun is more than 95 millions of miles. No one has in his mind the idea of a straight line so long as 95 millions of miles. Such a conception is too great for our capacity to comprehend. Nevertheless all understand the meaning of the terms employed in the proposition; all firmly believe the fact; and may even draw deductions from it with unfailing certainty. In like manner, when we say, that God is either infinitely extended, or infinitely wise, or powerful, or good, we annex distinct ideas to the terms "extended," "wise," "powerful," and "good," although our ideas necessarily fall short of the truth, so far as respects the *degree*, in which these qualities belong to the Almighty.

Whilst therefore we admit and lament, that the conceptions of the generality of Professing Christians are probably inaccurate and confused even upon the fundamental truths of Natural Religion; we maintain that all men of ordinary capacities may *by the proper use of their understandings* obtain notions of the Deity clear, distinct, and well-defined, and that Mr. Wardlaw's plea for believing in mysteries as the primary truths of religion, is therefore ill-founded and fallacious.

Before quitting the subject of mysteries, it is proper to explain the use of the term in the New Testament. The word "*Mystery*" is there employed in a sense widely different from those given to it by modern Trinitarians. It does not denote any thing either irrational or incomprehensible; it signifies, that which is for a time unknown, but which nevertheless may be clearly understood. *Mystery* is properly a Greek word; the English term, by which it may be most exactly rendered, is the word *Secret*. The *Mysteries of a Trade* are the *Secrets* of that trade, clearly comprehended by those who exercise it, but unknown to men of other professions. The *Eleusinian Mysteries*

among the ancient Greeks were the *secrets* of the worship of Ceres, which were open to the initiated, but hidden from the vulgar. So the mysteries of the Christian religion are the secrets, which were unknown to mankind until Jesus Christ came to reveal or discover them. But, being revealed, they are found to be plain and consistent truths, and contain nothing, which is either difficult to be understood, or apparently absurd.

Let us examine some passages of the New Testament, where the word occurs.

Mat. xiii. 11. When our Lord was asked by his disciples, why he spoke to the multitude in parables, he replied, "Because it is given unto you to know *the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven*, but to them it is not given:" that is, The disciples were favoured with the knowledge *of the hidden designs of God concerning the establishment and propagation of the Christian Religion:* but the multitude had not such a revelation; to them the purposes of God were still mysteries, being concealed from their inspection.

Rom. xi. 25. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant *of this mystery*, (lest ye be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;" that is, To prevent you from priding yourselves on account of your superiority in religious knowledge to the rest of mankind, I tell you *this secret*, that many of the Israelites will remain in unbelief, while the gospel will be generally received among the Gentiles;—a prediction, which the event has proved to be true;—a fact, which probably could not have been known without supernatural illumination, but which, being revealed, is perfectly plain and simple.

In the same epistle, (Rom. xvi. 25, 26.) the religion of Christ is called "*the mystery*, which was KEPT SECRET *since the world began*, but *now* is MADE MANIFEST, and,

by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, MADE KNOWN to all nations for the obedience of faith." The same Apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. ii. 7—10.) calls the matter of his own preaching *a mystery;* "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery;" and he then more fully explains himself by adding, "even the *hidden* wisdom, which *none of the princes of this world knew*,—but which God *hath revealed to Christians* by his spirit."

Because he was employed in publishing and explaining to mankind the purposes of God, which were before kept secret, but now revealed, he says, (1 Cor. iv. 1.) "Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ, and *stewards of the mysteries of God.*" In his sublime description of the last day, he calls *the general resurrection* a mystery, (1 Cor. xv. 51—54.) because this great event was wholly unknown to mankind, until it was foretold by Jesus Christ, who brought life and incorruption to light. In his epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul applies the term *Mystery* to the purpose of the Almighty, which he kept concealed until the promulgation of the Gospel, of uniting the Jews and Gentiles into one Church. God is described, (Eph. i. 9.) as "*having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself;*" and the mystery is then explained to be, "*that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he would gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth.*" *Heaven and Earth*, according to the curious and important observation of Mr. Locke, signify the Jewish and the Gentile world. Accordingly, in the 3d. chapter, (v. 1—6,) the Apostle, referring probably to this brief and enigmatical expression, says, that on this subject he had written to them *afore in few words;* he then speaks of the mystery as "*in other ages not made known unto the sons of men, as it is*

now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the spirit ;" and lastly, he explains this mystery to consist in the following fact, " *that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel.*"

The word Mystery is employed in a few other passages; but those, which have been produced, render it abundantly plain, that, according to its Scriptural use it does not denote any thing, which is either contrary to reason, or incapable of being clearly understood. It signifies simply *a secret ;* that which is concealed for a while, but may be disclosed and made manifest. The doctrines of the Christian religion were mysteries so long as they were known only to God ; but they ceased to be mysteries so soon as they were revealed. The occurrence therefore of the term *Mystery* in the New Testament gives no countenance to the idea, that the religion of Christ contains any thing incomprehensible, or even difficult to be conceived. To declare a mystery is not to *raise* difficulties, but to *resolve* them. It was the office of Jesus (Matt. xiii. 35.) to " *utter things, which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*"

I shall conclude this Chapter with a quotation from an eminent divine, who will not be charged with an undue prepossession against mysteries in religion, since he was one of the most distinguished advocates of the doctrine of the Trinity.

" I know not whence it comes to pass, that men love to make plain things obscure, and like nothing in religion but riddles and mysteries. God indeed was pleased to institute a great many ceremonies, (and many of them of very obscure signification,) in the Jewish worship, to awe their childish minds into a greater veneration for his Divine Majesty. But in these last days, God hath sent his own son into the world to make a plain and easy and perfect revelation of his will, to publish such a religion as may approve

itself to our reason, and captivate our affections by its natural charms and beauties. And there cannot be a greater injury to the Christian religion, than to render it obscure and unintelligible. And yet too many there are, who despise every thing which they understand, and think nothing a sufficient trial of their faith, but what contradicts the sense and reason of mankind."*

* Dr. William Sherlock's "Knowledge of Christ," p. 131. For further considerations on the subject of mysteries in religion, the reader is referred to the old Unitarian Tracts, vol. I. Foster's Sermons, vol. I. No. 7. Toulmin's Sermon on Mystery. Campbell's Gospels, Diss. IX. part 1st. Rees' Cyclopedia, Article, Mystery. Schleusner's Lexicon, voce Μυστηριον.

PART II.

INTRODUCTION.

Having endeavoured to determine with clearness and precision the principles, by which every inquirer after religious truth ought to be guided, I proceed to bring forward the evidence in favour of the two controverted systems, and to judge of them by the standard of these principles. In the 2d Part, I shall state the opinions and arguments of Unitarians concerning the Unity of God, the Subordination of Jesus Christ, and the use of the terms "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of God" in the Sacred Scriptures. In the 3d Part, I shall consider the *objections*, by which Mr. Wardlaw has attempted to invalidate the Unitarian doctrines.

CHAPTER I.

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE UNITY OF GOD FROM THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

By the Unity of God, Unitarians do not understand merely *a unity of counsel*, or that there is no distraction of plans, or opposition of inclinations, manifested by the course of nature. They mean that the Universe is subject to one simple and undivided Mind, one all-wise Designer, who is uncreated, unchangeable, and everlasting, sufficient, without the aid of any counsellor, assistant, or associated God, for the production

of every effect, which is exhibited throughout endless time and infinite space. This doctrine they conceive to be proved by the appearances of the material universe, as well as by the express testimony of Revelation.

The argument for the Unity of God, derived from the appearances of nature, proceeds upon the maxim, which is adopted in all reasonings from effects to causes, that No MORE CAUSES OUGHT TO BE SUPPOSED THAN ARE NECESSARY TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EFFECTS. If we keep in view this universally admitted axiom, and trace the connexions and analogies, which pervade the several parts of nature, we shall perceive, that it is in the highest degree unreasonable to believe in more Gods than one.

The being, who made one blade of grass, might make another; he, who has invented and formed a perfect tree, might invent and form every plant, which grows upon the earth. One intelligent being therefore, capable of producing a part of the vegetable creation, is capable of producing the whole; so that the supposition of more than one is totally unnecessary. But this supposition is also improbable and absurd. All plants, however various, have many common properties, and are formed according to one general model. They are all nourished by air, earth, and moisture; they are all propagated by seed; they are all defended from the severity of the weather by bark; they all have roots, stalks, leaves, adapted to their several functions; and not an instance is known of any species of plant, which does not bear flowers, provided with the admirable apparatus of stamens, pistils, or other organs, necessary for perfecting the seed. That all these contrivances should have occurred to many independent Deities, is incredible. They form one model, according to which all the various races of vegetables are fashioned, and this model must have been the contrivance of one mind.

We may apply the same mode of reasoning to the *animal* creation. The God, who could make one man, could make any number of men. The supposition of one God therefore is sufficient to account for the formation of the human race. It is also in the highest degree improbable, that a number of independent Deities would by any chance or fatality conspire to create a race of beings, so singular, so complicated, and at the same time so admirably adapted to their situation. In like manner it may be observed, that all the tribes of animated creatures, quadrupeds, birds, insects, and fishes, exhibit in the organs, by which they eat, breathe, move, and perform the other functions of life, some common features of resemblance, which prove that the whole animal creation owes its existence to one contriving mind.

If, in the next place, we consider the connexion, which subsists between the animal and vegetable kingdoms, we shall perceive that he, who causes all plants to spring out of the ground, is the very same being, who gives life to all animals. Plants were evidently intended to supply food to animals, and animals are furnished with all the necessary organs for procuring nutriment from plants. The flowers and fruits of certain plants require the co-operation of certain animals, as the necessary medium for perfecting and dispersing the seed, which end is accomplished by contrivances in the one class of beings, corresponding to contrivances in the other class. Another adaptation of the vegetable to the animal kingdom, which is pregnant with the most salutary results, appears from the celebrated discovery of Priestley, that, when animals have vitiated the air by breathing it, plants produce in it that change, which renders it again fit for respiration. But not only are these two tribes of beings adapted to one another so as to cooperate towards the accomplishment of the most important

purposes; they are also to a considerable degree similar in their structure. The bark of the vegetable orders corresponds, for example, to the skin of animals; and many other striking points of analogy are well known to the naturalists. From the connexion and resemblance therefore, which are seen between the vegetable and the animal creation, we are induced to conclude, that one designing cause contrived them both.

Let us now consider the relations, which the innumerable tribes of plants and animals bear to the solid ground, to the rivers, the seas, the ocean, and the atmosphere: we shall be convinced that the constitution of the earth itself is the contrivance of the same God, who produced its various contents. The atmosphere, which encircles the globe, is one uniform substance, and cannot be supposed to have been formed by more than one cause. It is necessary for the support of plants and animals; and, being thus intimately related to them, it must have been created by the same intelligent Author, who has made for them every other requisite provision. The collections of water on the earth also contribute to the welfare of the animal and vegetable tribes, by supplying through the medium of the atmosphere that moisture, which is no less necessary to them than the air and the soil. The seas, from which vapours are raised, the atmosphere, which with buoyant elasticity conveys them over the earth, and then drops them in showers upon the thirsty hills, the various tribes of plants and animals, which are nourished by this refreshing distillation, are closely bound together, and wisely accommodated for the joint production of the most beneficial effects. How could this result have been expected, if one Deity had poured out the seas, another spread forth the atmosphere, and another formed the races of animals and plants? In this case it would have been in the highest degree improbable, that

one part of the globe would have corresponded to another with such admirable exactness. Since therefore the earth we inhabit is one complete whole, all the parts of which are mutually dependent, so that nothing can be taken away without injuring what remains, the unity of plan so strikingly discernible must be considered as proving the unity of its contriver.

But the earth, though complete in itself, is only a part of another far greater system. In this system the unity of plan indicates with equal clearness the unity of its cause. In its centre is the sun, which dispenses the necessary portions of light and heat to all the surrounding bodies, and at the same time retains them in their orbits by its attraction. The planets, including our earth, move round this centre with the greatest uniformity. They are subject to the same laws. They all describe in their courses the same geometrical figure, *viz.* the Ellipse; they all move in the same direction, and with degrees of swiftness determined by one rule; they have all nearly the same shape, that of a globe; they all experience the changes of day and night, and the vicissitudes of the seasons. These features of resemblance place it beyond a doubt, that the same powerful Creator, who formed the Earth, formed also the other planets, which have the same constitution, and are subject, so far as we know, to the same laws. The close connexion between the planets and the sun proves also the unity of their cause; and thus the whole solar system appears to be the work of one mind, who first contrived its plan and determined upon its laws, and then constructed the whole out of disorderly matter according to the sublime conceptions of his eternal reason.

Lastly, the Fixed Stars, though placed at immeasurable distances beyond the limits of our solar system, confess the same almighty Author. The light, which comes from

them, possesses all the admirable properties of the light, which comes from the sun. If the sun were placed at a sufficient distance from us, it would present exactly the same appearance as a fixed star. We cannot doubt therefore that the fixed stars are suns, which resemble ours in their nature and uses, and which consequently must have the same cause with ours.

Thus, by traversing in imagination all the parts of creation from the least to the greatest, and observing their resemblances and relations to one another, we arrive at the great conclusion, that all are the contrivance and workmanship of one Almighty Mind.

Should any one still object, that the universe may possibly have been planned by the counsel and co-operation of many Divinities, we refute the assertion in the following manner. Either *all* of these supposed Divinities were fallible and limited in their capacities, or *one of them at least* was infinitely perfect.

If any one of them was infinitely perfect, his wisdom and omnipotence were alone sufficient for the formation of the universe. To suppose the existence of any associated creator, is therefore to assign more causes than are necessary to account for the effects. One Infinite Mind is competent to the production of every thing which exists. To believe therefore in any other designer, either of confined or unlimited powers, is to violate the established principles of reasoning.

The other supposition, that *all* the Deities concerned in the creation of the universe were limited and imperfect in their faculties, is equally untenable. Such beings could not co-operate. Discord would arise in their counsels. False and confined views would suggest opposite schemes, the execution of which would fill all nature with confusion. The idea of a number of imperfect and finite Divinities is

therefore contradicted by the beautiful uniformity of plan, which binds together all the parts of creation in indissoluble harmony, and which continues unimpaired through ages of ages. "If," says Lactantius, "there were in an army as many commanders as companies, it could neither be drawn up in order, nor led out to battle; for all would follow their own private opinions, and do more harm than good. So in the kingdom of nature, unless there was one supreme head, to whom the care and management of the whole belonged, all things would be disjointed and fall to destruction."

CHAPTER II.

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE UNITY OF GOD FROM THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

NOTWITHSTANDING the proof of the Unity of God afforded by the harmonious correspondence of parts in the material creation, it is probable that this doctrine would have been unknown or little regarded, if it had not been taught to mankind by the clear and authoritative voice of Divine Revelation. In almost every page of the Bible it shines with incomparable lustre. To reveal, establish, and propagate this tenet, to which, however sublime and rational, men have in all ages evinced a strong disinclination, was the great end proposed to be accomplished by the inspiration of the Hebrew Prophets, and by the splendid series of miracles recorded in the Old Testament. To promulgate the same great truth among heathen nations, and ultimately to effect its universal reception in the world, appears to have been one of the principal purposes, which God designed to answer by the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For examples of Scripture testimonies in proof of this doctrine, which are so well known that it is unnecessary to quote them at length, I refer to the following passages; Ex. xx. 3. Deut. iv. 35, 39. vi. 4. 1 Sam. ii. 2. Ps. lxxxvi. 10. Is. xliv. 6. xlv. 5, 6, 7, 14, 18, 21, 22. Mal. ii. 10. Mat. xxiii. 9. Mark xii. 29, 32. 1 Cor. viii. 4—6. Gal. iii. 20. Eph. iv. 6. 1 Tim. i. 17. ii. 5. vi. 15, 16. James ii. 19. Jude 25.

These texts will be understood by all persons, whose minds are not pre-engaged in favour of an opposite opinion, as asserting the existence of one only Supreme Mind. When, for instance, we read, that "there is one God, and there is none other but he," unless we are swayed by prejudice, these words will at once suggest the idea of One Intelligent Being, alone possessed of every perfection, the cause and original of all things. The word *God* does not denote a *collection* of persons, or a *council* of intelligent agents; it signifies simply *one* person or intelligent agent. Consequently every text, which affirms that there is but one God, implies that there is but one person in the Godhead.

The Unity of God, as one individual person, is also denoted throughout the Bible by the almost constant use of *singular pronouns*, whenever any thought, action, attribute, or condition, is ascribed to the Supreme Being. In all languages the personal pronouns of the singular number are understood to apply only to one person. Thus, if I were writing a letter, by employing the pronouns of the *first* person and singular number, *I*, *Me*, *My*, I should confine my assertions to myself as one individual person. By using the pronouns of the *second* person and singular number, *Thou*, *Thee*, *Thy*, I should indicate that my assertions were addressed to my correspondent as one individual person. By introducing the pronouns of the *third* person and singular number, *He*, *Him*, *His*, I should denote, that it was one person only, whom I was speaking of. If, on the contrary, I were writing a letter in conjunction with any other intelligent being, we should use the pronouns *We*, *Us*, *Our;* or, if I were addressing in my letter more persons than one, I should say, *Ye*, *You*, *Your;* and, if I were writing any thing of more than one person, I should say, *They*, *Them*, *Their*.

Such being the universal application of pronouns, it is evident, not only to those who have studied Greek and Hebrew, but to all who know the use and meaning of human speech, that throughout the whole Bible God is almost uniformly mentioned as one person, this being implied in the almost constant use of singular pronouns.

When God appears to Abraham, he thus speaks; (Gen. xvii. 1, 2.) "*I* am the Almighty God; walk before *me*, and be thou perfect; and *I* will make *my* covenant between *me* and thee." To represent the address of more persons than one, the following language would have been employed; "*We* are the Almighty God, (or, Almighty Gods,) walk before *us* and be thou perfect; and *we* will make *our* covenant between *us* and thee." The Levites are stated in the book of Nehemiah, (ch. ix. 6.) to have uttered the following language of adoration; "*Thou*, even *thou*, art Lord alone; *thou* hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and *thou* preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth *thee*." This language necessarily signifies, that the Being, whom they designate "Lord alone," was *one person*. If he had been conceived to be more than one, the Levites would have expressed themselves thus; "*Ye*, even *ye* are Lord, (or Lords,) alone; *ye* have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, &c. and *ye* preserve them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth *you*." As an example from the New Testament, and of the use of the pronoun of the *third* person, we may take Heb. xi. 6. "But without faith it is impossible to please *him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that *he* is, and that *he* is a rewarder of them that diligently seek *him*." If the author of the epistle had conceived himself to be speaking of a plurality of persons, he would assuredly have said, "Without faith it is impossible to please

them; for he that cometh to God, must believe that *they* are, and that *they* are rewarders of them that diligently seek *them.*"

These three texts are only produced by way of illustration. The other passages, which assert the Deity to be one person by applying to him singular pronouns, extend from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of the Revelation. Like the sands upon the sea-shore, they cannot be numbered for multitude.

The testimony of the Scriptures is therefore consonant to the voice of reason in teaching that there is but one Supreme and Infinite Mind, the uncreated Jehovah, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, who is alone Eternal, Independent, and Immutable, the sole original fountain of life, perfection, and happiness.

CHAPTER III.

EVIDENCE THAT THE FATHER IS THE ONLY TRUE GOD.

HAVING thus shown, from the clear light of nature confirmed by the ample testimony of Revelation, that all created things were produced by the power, and are directed by the providence of One Infinite Mind, or Person, I proceed to establish another distinguishing article of the Unitarian creed, *viz.* that this one person is the same, who is repeatedly called in Scripture THE FATHER, and consequently that THE FATHER IS THE ONLY TRUE GOD.

No language can be more explicit than that which we find upon this subject in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians; (ch. viii. 6.) "*To us there is but one God, the Father.*" Equally decisive is the expression employed by the same Apostle in writing to the Ephesians; (Eph. iv. 4—6.) "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*" These passages require no comment. They declare the truth to be proved, *viz. that the one God, who is above all, is the Father,* in these very words. He therefore, who derides or denies this Unitarian doctrine, derides or denies the Scripture itself.

Another passage, held deservedly dear by those who advocate the doctrine of the proper unity of God, occurs in the solemn prayer uttered by our Lord before his crucifixion; (John xvii. 3.) "This is life eternal, that they might know *thee, the only true God,* and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Our Lord addresses one person, calling

that person "*the only true God.*" That the person addressed was *the Father*, is evident from the commencement of the prayer, "*Father*, the hour is come," (ver. 1.) and from the repetition of the title "Father" in several of the subsequent verses. (ver. 5, 11, 21, 24, 25.) It follows therefore, that *the Father is the only true God.*

Another passage, which proves the same doctrine, is that where Christ asserts, that the Father alone knew the day of general judgment. (Mat. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32.) "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." If any other being besides the Father were God, he would have known the day of judgment. Since therefore the Father alone knew this day, it is manifest that he alone is the omniscient God.

But the doctrine, that the Father is the only true God, rests not upon these few passages, however clear and decisive. It is expressed in the current language of the New Testament by the common use of the term *Father* as another name for the One Supreme. Let the reader consult any of the following passages, and he will find that the Supreme Deity, the One Only God, is there designated by that single phrase, "THE FATHER." Mat. xi. 27.* Luke x. 22.* John i. 18. iii. 35. v. 23,* 26, 36,* 37, 45. vi. 37, 44, 45, 46,* 57. viii. 27, 29. x. 15.* xii. 49, 50. xiii. 1, 3. xiv. 6, 8, 9,* 10,** 11,* 13, 24, 26, 28, 31.* xv. 9, 26.* xvi. 3, 15, 16, 17, 25, 27, 28,* 32. xviii. 11. xx. 21. Acts i. 4, 7. 1 John i. 2, 3. ii. 1, 15, 16, 22, 23,* 24. iii. 1. iv. 14. 2 John 4, 9.

N. B. An asterisk placed after a verse denotes the repetition of the title "*Father*" applied to the Deity.

In other passages, (which I shall only refer to, leaving the diligent reader to examine them for himself,) the one only God is denominated, "GOD THE FATHER;" John vi.

27. Gal. i. 1, 3. Eph. vi. 23. Phil. ii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 2. Titus i. 4. 1 Peter i. 2. 2 Peter i. 17. 2 John 3. Jude 1. "God and the Father," or "God even the Father;" James i. 27. iii. 9. "God our Father;" 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. Col. i. 2. 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1, 2. 1 Tim. i. 2. Philem. 3. "God and our Father," or "God even our Father;" Gal. i. 4. Phil. iv. 20. 1 Thess. i. 3. iii. 11, 13. 2 Thess. ii. 16. "The Father of mercies," which means "*The very merciful Father;*" 2 Cor. i. 3. "The Father of glory," which means "*The glorious Father;*" Eph. i. 17. and, as our Lord employs the title, addressing his disciples, "Your Father who is in heaven," Mat. v. 45, 48. vi. 1. vii. 11. xviii. 14. xxiii. 9. Mark xi. 25, 26. "Your heavenly Father," Mat. vi. 14, 26, 32. Luke xi. 13. "Your Father," Mat. vi. 8, 15. x. 20, 29. Luke vi. 36. xii. 30, 32. "Thy Father," Mat. vi. 4, 6,* 18.*

This collection of testimonies to the Unitarian doctrine might be swelled out by the addition of the passages in which the one true God is called *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* These all bear upon the same point, but are omitted here, because there will be occasion to refer to them hereafter. But more than a hundred proofs have been produced already, which, I conceive, must impress every unprejudiced inquirer with the conviction, that *the Father alone ought to be the God of Christians.*

The opinion of Unitarians upon this subject is further confirmed by all those passages, which represent the Father *as the proper object of Supreme worship.* The form of prayer, which Jesus prescribed for the use of his disciples, commences with this invocation, "Our Father who art in heaven." (Mat. vi. 9. Luke xi. 2.) When our Lord foretells to the woman of Samaria the approaching substitution of spiritual in place of ritual worship, he distinctly

mentions the Father as the proper object of adoration ; (John iv. 21, 23.) " Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, *worship the Father*.—The hour cometh, and now is, *when the true worshippers shall worship the Father* in spirit and in truth ; for *the Father seeketh such to worship him*." In conformity with this general direction, our Saviour exhorted his Apostles to address themselves in prayer *to the Father*, as to the being who was able and willing to grant their petitions ; (John xvi. 23.) " Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask *the Father* in my name, he will give it you." See to the same purpose John xv. 16. Mat. xviii. 19.

The conduct of our blessed Lord was agreeable to his precept : (Mat. xi. 25, 26. Luke x. 21.) " At that time Jesus answered and said, " I thank thee, *O Father*, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ; even so, *Father*, for so it seemed good in thy sight." That it was the practice of Jesus to address himself in the language of supplication *to the Father*, is likewise manifest from the following passages ; Mat. xxvi. 39, 42, 53. Mark xiv. 36. Luke xxii. 42. xxiii. 34, 46. John xii. 27, 28. xiv. 16. xvi. 26. xvii. 1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25.

In this respect, as in all others, the Apostle Paul was a follower of Christ. To give thanks for all things *to the Father* was his practice, (Eph. iii. 14. Col. i. 3.) and his precept. (Rom. xv. 6. Eph. v. 20. Col. i. 12. iii. 17.)

Thus are we authorized by the examples and the commands of Jesus, our master, and of the Apostle Paul, to consider the Father as the only proper object of supreme adoration. Hence we conclude, that he is the only God.

So clear, numerous, and decisive are the proofs, which establish the Unitarian doctrines, 1st, that God is one sim-

ple and undivided mind or person, and 2ndly, that that one person is the Father.—And is it not an unspeakable satisfaction to have the subject thus simplified and cleared of mystery? Must not the humble worshipper, who laments that his piety is checked, not only by the importunities of appetite and the attractions of material objects, but by the real difficulty of contemplating with fixed attention a being unseen, unfelt, and unheard, rejoice in every discovery, which contributes to render the sublime work of praise more easy as well as more delightful? But to enlarge on these views, though useful as well as agreeable, would be to depart from the line of strict Scriptural argumentation. I proceed therefore, in the next Chapter, to state and defend the Unitarian doctrine on the person of Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

STATEMENT OF THE UNITARIAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE PERSON OF CHRIST. EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS NOT GOD, BUT A DISTINCT BEING FROM HIM.

In the Sermon, preached at the opening of the Unitarian Chapel in Glasgow, I have stated, (p. 12, 13.) that, although Unitarians differ among themselves concerning the Miraculous Conception and Pre-existence of Christ, some rejecting, and others believing these tenets, yet they all deny that he was the Eternal God; and those of them, who believe that he created the material world, nevertheless conceive, that in the execution of this work, he was only employed as an instrument in the hands of the Deity, and unite with the general body of Unitarians in maintaining, that he was not possessed of underived wisdom and independent power. The distinguishing principles of Unitarianism therefore, which it is now my object to defend, are these; that our Lord Jesus Christ was not God, but a distinct being from him; that he was inferiour and subordinate to the Father; and that he received from the Father all his Wisdom and his Power. To these doctrines it is commonly objected, that they lower the dignity of the Saviour. Let the candid reader bear in mind the maxim, acknowledged on all hands, and laid down at the commencement of our inquiry, that the truth of religious doctrines ought to be tried, not by the standard of our fancies, wishes, and feelings, but by the Word of God.

If, with a sincere desire of arriving at the truth, we apply to this source of information, we, in the first place, observe

numerous passages, which represent Jesus Christ *as a distinct being from God*. Thus St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, (ch. v. 1.) makes the following assertion ; " We have peace WITH *God* THROUGH *our Lord Jesus Christ*." Two different beings are here presented to our contemplation. The first is the being, *to* whom we are reconciled ; the second is the mediator, *through* whom we are reconciled to him. The first is called God. Since therefore we know that there is only one God, it necessarily follows, that the second is not God.

The same distinction is commonly made in the benedictions at the commencement of the epistles ; " Grace be to you and peace *from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ ;*" Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 2. Philem. 3. and with a slight variety of expression, Gal. i. 3. 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2. Titus i. 4. " Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge *of God, and of Jesus our Lord ;*" 2 Peter i. 2. "Grace be with you, mercy and peace, *from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ*." 2 John 3. To these passages may be added the salutation of Paul, Eph. vi. 23. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, *from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*." Also the blessing of the same Apostle upon the Thessalonians, 2 Thess. ii. 16. " Now *our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father*, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work ;" and his devout wish, 1 Thess. iii. 11. " Now *God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, direct our way unto you." Each of these 17 passages expresses a pious and benevolent wish of favour and assistance from two distinct beings. One of the two is in every instance called "*God :*" to the other this title is

never applied ; and, since it is certain that there is but one God, the inference appears irresistible, that this other person, namely, " our Lord Jesus Christ," is not God.

The same conclusion may be drawn from the marked distinction between the one true God and the Lord Jesus Christ in passages, containing ascriptions of praise to the Supreme Being, or giving directions concerning his worship. Rom. xvi. 27. " To GOD ONLY WISE be glory *through Jesus Christ* for ever." Eph. v. 20. " Giving thanks always for all things UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Col. iii. 17. " Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks TO GOD AND THE FATHER *by him.*" Heb. xiii. 15. " *By him* (*Jesus*) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise TO GOD continually." 1 Peter ii. 5. " Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable TO GOD *by Jesus Christ.*" All these Scriptures point out one being, namely GOD, *to* whom thanksgiving and praise are justly offered, and a second person, *the Lord Jesus Christ*, *through whom*, or *in the name of whom*, these services are to be rendered to God.

Further, there are various passages of the New Testament, which assert that *Jesus Christ was with God*, (such as John i. 1, 2.) or that *God was with him*, (such as John iii. 2. Acts x. 38.) These passages, while they teach that Jesus was nearly allied to God in his endowments or his office, at the same time prove that he was a distinct being from God. To illustrate this phrase by a simple example ; it has been conjectured, that Luke, the evangelist, was the same man, who is called in Paul's epistles Sylvanus. We may conceive of the question being settled in the following manner. Suppose we were to find in any part of the New

Testament this expression, "Luke was with Sylvanus." We should immediately conclude, that Luke was not Sylvanus, but a different person. In like manner, when we find it asserted, that "the Word was with God," or that "God was with Christ," we draw the obvious inference, that Jesus Christ was not God, but, though favoured with an intimate communion with him, a totally distinct being. The same conclusion might be derived from the expression of Paul, (2 Cor. v. 19.) that "God was *in* Christ."

We find it frequently asserted in the gospel of John, (ch. iii. 2. viii. 42. xiii. 3.* xvi. 10, 16, 17, 27, 28,* 30. xvii. 13. xx. 17.) that *Jesus came from God*, and that *he went to God*. That God could come from himself, or go to himself, is a manifest absurdity. These expressions therefore imply a clear distinction between God and Christ, as two different persons.

The following 26 passages, (and more might have been added,) will be found, upon the examination of the diligent inquirer, to mark the same opposition between God and Christ, as two distinct beings, sustaining different characters and standing in different relations. For the sake of brevity, I omit quoting them at length; but happily the Bible is in every one's hands.

John xiv. 1. xvii. 3. Acts ii. 22. Rom. v. 11. 2 Cor. ii. 17. iii. 4. v. 18. xii. 19. Gal. i. 1. Eph. iv. 32. v. 2. Phil. ii. 11. iii. 14. Col. iii. 3. 1 Thess. i. 1. v. 18. 2 Thess. i. 1. 1 Tim. i. 1. ii. 5. 2 Tim. iv. 1. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. James i. 1. 1 Peter v. 10. 2 Peter i. 1. Rev. i. 1. vii. 10.

I conclude this compendious view of the proofs, that Jesus Christ was a distinct being from the one true God, by referring to two passages in the epistles of Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and Col. i. 15. in which our Lord is said to be "*the image of God*;" to the parallel assertion of the writer to the Hebrews, (Heb. i. 3.) that he was "*the express image*

of God's person ;" and to the remark of Paul, (Phil. ii. 6.) that Christ was "*in the form of God.*" To say, that any person is the image of himself, or in the form of himself, would be absolute nonsense. When a resemblance is asserted to exist between two beings, the assertion necessarily implies, that these two beings are distinct from one another. The passages just quoted consequently teach us, that our Lord was *like* God, but not God himself.

The proofs, which have been adduced in this chapter, show that Jesus Christ is not God, but another being different from him. The same doctrine *of a distinction between God and Christ* is taught with equal clearness in the passages, which will be brought forward in the three next chapters to prove that our Lord is *inferiour and subordinate to the Father*, and that *he received from the Father all his wisdom and his power.* The passages now to be produced are therefore *doubly* decisive ; they involve one proof within another.

CHAPTER V.

EVIDENCE THAT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS INFERIOUR AND SUBORDINATE TO GOD THE FATHER.

"My Father is greater than I." John xiv. 28. This testimony is so clear and explicit, that it does not admit of illustration.

"Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;" 1 Cor. iii. 23. that is, As Christians are subject to the dominion of Christ, so Christ is subject to the dominion of God.

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and *the head of Christ is God.*" 1 Cor. xi. 3. This passage plainly signifies, that, as man ranks above woman, and as Christ is superiour to his disciples, so God is superiour to Christ.

The subjection of our Lord to the one true God, the Father, is described by a great variety of expressions.

He was

CHOSEN by God; "Behold my servant, *whom I have chosen.*" Mat. xii. 18.

APPOINTED by God; "Faithful *to him that appointed him.*" Heb. iii. 2.

SANCTIFIED by God; "Him, *whom the Father hath sanctified.*" John x. 36.

INSPIRED by God; "I will put my spirit upon him." Mat. xii. 18. "The spirit of the LORD (Jehovah) is upon me." Luke iv. 18. quoted from Is. lxi. 1. "God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." John iii. 34.

Anointed by God; Jehovah "hath *anointed* me to preach the gospel to the poor." Luke iv. 18. "He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The *Christ* (that is, the *Anointed*) *of God*." Luke ix. 20. "The rulers were gathered together against the Lord (*i. e.* Jehovah) and against *his Christ*, (*or, his Anointed*, see Ps. ii. 2.) For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, *whom thou hast anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together." Acts iv. 26, 27. "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth* with the holy spirit and with power." Acts x. 38. "*God*, even thy God, *hath anointed* thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Heb. i. 9.

Given by God; "God so loved the world, that *he gave his only-begotten son*." John iii. 16.

Sent by God; "Then said Jesus to them, (the Apostles,) "Peace be unto you; as *my Father hath sent me*, even so send I you." John xx. 21. "As *Thou hast sent me into the world*, even so have I also sent them into the world." John xvii. 18. See also Luke iv. 18, 43. John iii. 17, 34. iv. 34. v. 24, 30, 36, 37, 38. vi. 38, 39, 40, 44, 57. vii. 16, 18, 28, 29. viii. 16, 18, 26, 29, 42. ix. 4. xii. 44, 45, 49. xiv. 24. xv. 21. xvi. 5. xvii. 3, 21, 23, 25. Acts iii. 26. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. iv. 4. 1 John iv. 9, 10, 14.

That God could be *Chosen*, *Appointed*, *Sanctified*, *Inspired*, *Anointed*, *Given*, or *Sent*, especially by himself, is plainly impossible. But the application of these expressions to Jesus agrees with his assertions, that *he came to do the will of a superiour, and not his own*, which assertions he often repeated during the course of his ministry, and which prove decidedly his subjection to the only true God. "My meat is *to do the will of him that sent me*,

and to finish his work." John iv. 34. "I came down from heaven, *not to do mine own will*, but the will of him that sent me." John vi. 38. "I have not spoken of myself, but *the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment*, what I should say, and what I should speak." John xii. 49. "That the world may know that I love the Father, and *as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do*, arise, let us go hence." John xiv. 31. See also John xv. 10. xvii. 4. xviii. 11.

To the same head may be referred those passages, in which Jesus is said *to have come in the name of the Lord*. Mat. xxi. 9. Mark xi. 9. Luke xix. 38. John v. 43. xii. 13. Every messenger is inferiour to the person, in whose name he comes, from whom he receives his commission, or with whose authority he is invested.

Further, Jesus is called *the* SERVANT *of God*. The phrase, which expresses this title in the original Greek, occurs in the four following passages; Mat. xii. 18. Acts iii. 26. iv. 27. 30. In the passage from the gospel of Matthew, it is rightly translated *Servant*. In the three others this rendering is avoided by the authors of the common Version; but the sense of the original is not the less decisive in proof of the subjection of Christ to God. The title SERVANT OF GOD is however an *honourable* title on account of the majesty of the person served. Still more honourable is the title SON OF GOD, by which our Lord is repeatedly designated in the New Testament, and which also implies inferiority and subordination to the Father.

That the name *Son of God* is a mark of blissful and glorious distinction, is evident from the manner, in which it is applied both to the disciples of Christ and to our Saviour himself. "Behold," says the Apostle John, addressing his fellow-christians, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, *that we should be called the*

Sons of God." 1 John iii. 1. And, at the commencement of his gospel, (ch. i. 12.) he speaks of the privileges and advantages bestowed by Christ upon his followers in these terms; "As many as received him, *to them gave he power to become the Sons of God.*" St. Paul describes in the following language the exalted privileges and benefits conferred upon the *Sons or Children of God.* (Rom. viii. 14—21.) "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope: because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The honourable nature of this relation to God is likewise enlarged upon by the same Apostle in his epistle to the Galatians, ch. iv. 4—7.

That this title is an eminently glorious one is also manifest from the way, in which it is in many instances applied to our Saviour. It is the privilege of a Son to be admitted to the knowledge of his Father's mind and counsel. Hence Jesus describes the knowledge, which he enjoyed *as a Son of God* by saying, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son,

and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Mat. xi. 27.) At his transfiguration, the testimony borne to his person and character by a voice from heaven was in these words; (Mat. xvii. 5. Mark ix. 7.) "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" That this was an *honourable* attestation appears from the impression made by it upon the mind of Peter, who says, (2 Peter i. 17.) "He received from God the Father *honour and glory*, when there came forth a voice to him from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." It was in reply to his profession of faith in the exalted character of Jesus *as the Son of God*, that this Apostle received the most splendid and animating eulogy ever pronounced upon a disciple of Christ; (Mat. xvi. 15—18.) "Jesus saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

That the relation of *Son of God* was esteemed by the Jews in general a state of protection, favour, and confidence, is evident from the insulting language of the chief-priests, scribes, and elders, when they saw Jesus suspended on the cross; (Mat. xxvii. 43.) "He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, "I am the Son of God." St. Paul likewise affirms, that Jesus, though sprung by natural descent from David, was declared to be THE SON OF GOD *by his power, by the holy spirit, and by his resurrection from the dead:* (Rom. i.

3, 4.) the author of the epistle to the Hebrews proves the superiority of Christ to angels by the evidence of passages, in which he is called by this designation: (Heb. i. 5:) and St. John states it to be the distinguishing characteristick of a Christian to confess, that Jesus is *the Son of God;* 1 John iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

It is evident therefore, that the appellation, "Son of God," by which our Lord Jesus Christ is peculiarly called, is a title of the most exalted kind. But it is equally evident from the very meaning of the words, that it implies subjection to the Father. It denotes a state of *approbation*, of *favour*, of *protection*, and of *privilege*, but it is also a state of *inferiority*, of *dependence*, and of *subordination*. Hence all the passages, in which this glorious title is applied to Jesus, confirm the Unitarian doctrine concerning his person. The testimonies, already cited as proofs of his pre-eminent dignity above other creatures, express likewise his inferiority to the great Father of all. The other passages, in which this title is applied to him, are the following: Mat. iii. 17. iv. 3, 6. viii. 29. xiv. 33. xxvi. 63, 64. xxvii. 40, 54. Mark i. 1, 11. iii. 11. v. 7. xiv. 61, 62. xv. 39. Luke i. 32, 35. iii. 22. iv. 3, 9, 41. viii. 28. ix. 35. xxii. 70. John i. 34, 50. iii. 16, 17, 18. x. 36. xi. 4, 27. xiv. 13. xx. 31. Acts ix. 20. Rom. i. 9. v. 10. viii. 3, 29. 1 Cor. i. 9. 2 Cor. i. 19. Gal. iv. 4, 6. Col. i. 13. 1 Thess. i. 10. Heb. i. 2. v. 5. 1 John i. 3, 7. iii. 8, 23. iv. 9, 10, 14. v. 9, 10,* 11, 12,* 13, 20.* 2 John 3, 9.

If it be clear as the meaning of human speech can be, that the relative situations of *Father and Son*, imply *superiority in the Father* and *dependence in the Son*, then is the Unitarian doctrine on the person of Christ, *viz.* that the Father is greater than he, confirmed likewise by all those Scrip-

tures, in which the one true God is called HIS FATHER. This phrase occurs in the following passages, which contain sixty distinct proofs of the inferiour rank of Jesus. Mat. vii. 21. x. 32, 33. xi. 27. xii. 50. xvi. 17, 27. xviii. 10, 19, 35. xx. 23. xxvi. 39, 42, 53. Mark viii. 38. Luke x. 22. xxii. 29. xxiv. 49. John ii. 16. v. 17. vi. 32, 65. viii. 19,* 28, 38, 49, 54. x. 18, 25, 29,* 32, 37, xiv. 2, 7, 12, 20, 21, 23, 28. xv. 1. 8, 10, 15, 23, 24. xvi. 10. xx. 17.* Rom. xv. 6. 2 Cor. i. 3. xi. 31. Eph. i. 3. iii. 14. Col. i. 3. 1 Peter i. 3. Rev. i. 6. ii. 28. iii. 5, 21.

But the one Infinite Mind is repeatedly called not only *the Father of Jesus*, but likewise HIS GOD. Thus St. Paul (Eph. i. 17.) "ceased not to give thanks" for the Christians at Ephesus," making mention of them in his prayers, that *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory*, might give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." That "THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" was one of the grandest and most interesting names, by which he was known among the primitive Christians, may be inferred from the following passages, in which he is called by that title; John xx. 17. Rom. xv. 6. 2 Cor. i. 3. xi. 31. Eph. i. 3. Col. i. 3. 1 Peter i. 3. Rev. i. 6. What appellation could be more adapted to raise the emotions of mingled love and reverence, than that which represented him as the being, to whom Jesus Christ himself looked up as to HIS GOD AND FATHER, whose support, protection, instruction, and friendship Jesus himself sought, in order that he might be the supporter, the protector, the instructor, and the friend of his meek and humble followers. To obtain such support, Jesus pleads on the cross, "*My God, My God*, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mat. xxvii. 46. Mark xv. 34.) and, on the other hand, when invested with the highest dignity and glory, he still maintains a becoming sense of subordination to HIS GOD.

Rev. iii. 12. Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of MY GOD, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of MY GOD, and the name of the city of MY GOD, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from MY GOD; and I will write upon him my new name." The words, immediately subjoined by the Apostle John, may be introduced in this place as an admonition to those, who have the means of learning the unrivalled majesty and supreme dominion of the Father; "HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES." And, lest any one should oppose these solemn declarations of our Lord and teachings of the holy spirit, by replying that the Almighty was the Father and God of Jesus *in some sense which we cannot comprehend*, let us remember those animating and consoling words, which our newly-risen Saviour addressed to Mary, and which assure us, that *his God and Father is* OURS. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

A further collection of arguments to prove the inferiority of Christ might be amassed by collecting those passages which assert that he *offered up prayer to God*. This is undoubtedly the attitude of a dependent and a creature. A being, who possessed in himself the power to accomplish without any resistance all his desires, could have no occasion to pray. Jesus could not pray to an equal, much less to an inferiour. This act therefore, so often performed by him, and with such earnestness and humility, establishes the opinion for which we contend, that the Father was greater than he.

The same doctrine is proved by the fact, that he had a beginning, and was created by God. "The first-born of every creature," or "of the whole creation;" Col. i. 15. "The beginning of the creation of God;" Rev. iii. 14. If

Jesus Christ was the "first-born," or the "beginning" of God's creation, it is manifest that he was a *part* of that creation. If he was *created by God*, if he was *born*, or produced into being, if he had a *beginning*, although the first of all creatures in point of *time* as well as eminence, he was inferiour to the Eternal Jehovah, his maker and the maker of all.

I conclude this portion of the evidence for the inferiority of Jesus to God with his reply to the ruler, who kneeled to him and asked him, "Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus said unto him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God." Mark x. 17, 18. Luke xviii. 18, 19. With the modesty and piety, which gave dignity and grace to the whole of his behaviour, our Lord declines the character of goodness, and acknowledges himself to be inferiour in this respect to God, who alone is perfectly good, and to whom his creatures should at all times yield the praise of inherent, absolute, and unceasing beneficence.

CHAPTER VI.

EVIDENCE FOR THE UNITARIAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST, VIZ. THAT THEY WERE IMPARTED TO HIM BY GOD THE FATHER.

"WHENCE hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" was a question asked by those who heard our Saviour's sublime discourses, and saw his astonishing acts of power. (Mat. xiii. 54.) The same question is still agitated. The replies made to it form a principal distinction between two large and respectable bodies of Christians. The Trinitarians maintain, that, as Jesus Christ was really and truly God, he required no communication of knowledge or power from any other being, but was from all eternity, and by his own nature, infinitely wise, omniscient, and omnipotent. The Unitarians, on the contrary, assert, that he derived his wisdom, his knowledge, and his power, from the same being who brought him into existence, from the one eternal and almighty God, the Father. Both parties profess to follow the Scriptures as their guide. To them therefore we appeal: and first, let us inquire what the Scriptures teach us concerning the origin of our Saviour's WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.

The question seems to be set at rest by the plain declarations of our blessed Lord himself, which are recorded by the evangelist John in great abundance, because it was his particular design in writing his gospel to establish the divine mission of Jesus, and thus to retrieve many, who were in danger of lapsing into unbelief. The following passages are selected from the discourses and

prayers of Jesus, contained in the gospel of this apostle. "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth." John v. 20. "As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, who hath sent me." ver. 30. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me; if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." vii. 16, 17. "He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of (that is, from) him." viii. 26. "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." ver. 28. "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." ver. 38. "I have not spoken of (that is, from) myself; but the Father, who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak; and I know that his commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." xii. 49, 50. "All things that I have heard of (from) my Father, I have made known unto you." xv. 15. "Now they (the disciples) have known, that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee; for I have given unto them the words, which thou gavest me, and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." xvii. 7, 8.

In each of these passages our Lord utterly disclaims delivering doctrines or precepts from his own knowledge and authority. He asserts, that he was enabled to deliver his instructions to his disciples only in consequence of what had been "given," "shown," and "taught" to him by his Father, only in consequence of what he had "seen" and "heard" with God, and agreeably to the "commandment" of a Superiour.

The same account of the origin of our Saviour's wisdom is given by St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians ; 1 Cor. i. 30. Jesus Christ "*of God is made* unto us *wisdom*." Let it be remembered, that there is no dispute, whether our Lord was transcendently wise. All good Christians confess from their hearts his *godlike* wisdom, and are filled with wonder " at the gracious words, which proceeded out of his mouth." The only question is, whether he was wise eternally and independently of instruction, or whether he was *made wise of God*.

The writer to the Hebrews commences his epistle by declaring, that the instructions delivered to mankind through Jesus Christ, like those previously communicated through the Prophets, came originally from God, who spake through him as well as through them. " God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Heb. i. 1, 2. Also, at the beginning of the Apocalypse we are informed, that the Revelation contained in it was *given by God to Jesus Christ ;* which expression, though it relates to a very limited portion of our Saviour's communications to mankind, illustrates the origin of his general knowledge upon sacred subjects.

With these representations of the *derived* knowledge of Jesus Christ, we may contrast the following august description of the *underived, unaided*, wisdom of Jehovah. " Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him ? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding ?" Isa. xl. 13, 14. It is the glory of God alone to know all things without being informed, and to pursue universally the best and wisest ends without being advised.

If there were any need of further witness to the truth of the Unitarian doctrine upon this subject, we might insist on the passages, briefly noticed in the last Chapter, which speak of the *inspiration* of Christ. The omniscient God could not be inspired. Knowing all things without communication, he could not possibly receive any addition to his all comprehending and infallible wisdom.

To conclude this discussion; the Scripture teaches us, that the knowledge of Christ was not merely *derived*, but also *limited*. For he himself asserted, that he did not know the day of general judgment. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels, which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father," Mark xiii. 32. The Father, who alone knew this day, must be the only God. The Son, who knew it not, could not be the supreme God, being inferiour to him in knowledge.

CHAPTER VII.

EVIDENCE FOR THE UNITARIAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF CHRIST'S POWER, VIZ. THAT IT WAS GIVEN TO HIM.

THE most common and obvious idea, by which we are accustomed to conceive of God as distinguished from his creatures, is the idea of POWER. A vast and astonishing *extent* of power, *ease*, *activity*, and *freedom from all restraint* in its exertion, and *dependence upon no other being* for the continued possession of it, form those features of a Divine character, which chiefly engage the attention of mankind. To prove that any person is a God, no method can be more direct than to show, that he is possessed of *underived and independent power*. I conceive therefore, that we might reduce the whole question concerning the Deity of Christ within this short compass, Did our Saviour possess his power without having received it from any other being, and did he exert it without being subject to the pleasure and control of any other? or were his authority, his glory, and his majesty, conferred upon him by a superiour? The former side of the question is espoused by the Trinitarians, who affirm that Jesus Christ was omnipotent from eternity and by his own nature, and that his power is incapable of any increase as well as of any diminution. The latter opinion is maintained with equal firmness by the Unitarians, who assert, that all the power of Christ was *given* to him. Each rank of disputants appeals, as usual, to the Scriptures. It is therefore my intention in this Chapter, by bringing forward all the passages of the New Testament, which relate to the power of Jesus, to

enable every reader to decide for himself the principal question at issue, *viz.* whether the power of Christ was *given*, or whether it was *underived*.

For the sake of perspicuous arrangement, I shall contemplate the power of Christ as exercised during three successive periods of his existence ; first, the period preceding his incarnation ; secondly, the period of his abode upon this earth ; thirdly, the period subsequent to his ascension into heaven.

I. In the first place, we shall examine, whether it is the doctrine of the New Testament, that our Lord was possessed of independent power and of underived glory and dominion before his birth of the virgin Mary.

I have already stated, that many Unitarians altogether deny the existence of Christ previously to his conception in the womb of his mother ; but that many others agree with the orthodox Christians in asserting, that he lived before his incarnation in a state of glory, and was employed by the Deity as an instrument in creating the material world. The determination of these lesser differences does not belong to our present inquiry ; they are to be settled among Unitarians by their own amicable discussions. The question now before us is, Whether, *granting the pre-existence of Christ*, he enjoyed before his incarnation *underived* power.

The only passage of the New Testament, which, on the supposition of Christ's pre-existent state, ascribes to him *glory* in that state, occurs in his solemn prayer to his heavenly Father, recorded in the 17th chapter of John's gospel ; " And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*" (John xvii. 5.) The question, now to be answered, is, Whether the glory, of which our Lord speaks, belonged to him originally by his own nature, or whether it was

given to him by the Father. It is decided by the subsequent expressions, relating to that glory, which occur in the same prayer. In verse 22, where our Lord unites himself in interest and affection with his disciples, we find it spoken of in these terms; "The glory, *which thou gavest me*, I have given them:" And, in verse 24. he prays, that his disciples might be with him, where he was, "that they may behold," says he, "my glory, *which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*" If therefore it be true, that our Lord enjoyed a state of glory "before the world was," or "before the foundation of the world," it is equally true, and it is proved by equal evidence, namely, by his own assertions in a solemn prayer addressed to the Father, that *that glory was derived*, being communicated to him from the only original fountain of all authority, power, and dominion.

But the passages, which represent Jesus as the creator of the material world, also suppose the exercise of power previously to his incarnation. These passages are decisively favourable to the Unitarian doctrine, that, if Jesus was concerned in the formation of the heavens and the earth, he was only employed as an instrument in the hands of God his Father. They are the following: John i. 3. "All things were made by him." Verse 10. "The world was made by him." Col. i. 16. "By him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; *all things were created by him*, and for him." Heb. i. 2. "By him He (*i. e.* God) made the worlds."* These passages, as I have now quoted them *from the common translation of the New Testament*, leave

* I omit producing Eph. iii. 9. as a proof of the Unitarian doctrine, because the words "δια Ιησου Χριστου," "*through Jesus Christ*," are rejected by Griesbach.

it undecided, whether Christ created all things by his own underived and independent authority, or merely as an instrument directed by the Supreme Being. *In the Greek original* there is no such ambiguity. The preposition DIA, in these passages translated BY, does not signify *by any one as an original cause*, (for this sense is expressed by a different preposition, HYPO,) but it denotes THROUGH ANY THING AS AN INSTRUMENT. For the sake of illustration I shall take the first example of the occurrence of DIA in the New Testament: Mat. i. 22. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet;" or, more accurately, "which was spoken *by* the Lord *through* the Prophet." In the first place, the preposition HYPO, *By*, points out the Lord as the *original author* of the communication; and, in the second place, the preposition DIA, *Through*, represents the Prophet as the *medium*, through whom this communication was conveyed to mankind. The same distinction is accurately observed in all cases, (and they are very numerous,) in which the New Testament writers produce quotations from the Prophets of the Old. They never introduce a prophecy by saying, that it was uttered THROUGH *the Lord*, (διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου,) and they very seldom, if ever, say, that it was delivered BY *the Prophet*, (ὑπὸ τοῦ Προφήτου,) but *through* the Prophet, and *by* the Lord.

The preposition DIA, followed either by a Genitive or Accusative case, occurs in the New Testament about 630 times. It is used to denote the *efficient cause of the production of an effect*, (of course governing in these instances the Genitive,) about 290 times. I have examined all the passages, where it is found. I have observed, that its general application, when used to point out an efficient cause, is to represent not the *primary*, but the *secondary*,

or *instrumental*, cause.* This sense of the word seems indeed to arise naturally from its original acceptation. It properly signifies motion *through a place*. Hence it has been transferred by an obvious process to the *way or method, by passing through which* any object is attained, or the *instrument, by means of which* any end is accomplished.

From reflecting upon the primary application of DIA in reference to *place*, its common use in Greek authors, and the distinction observed in the New Testament between this preposition and HYPO, I had formed a judgment of the Scripture testimonies concerning the Creation through Christ, before I saw the above remarks in any other author. I was lately much gratified to find that Origen, who lived at the beginning of the third century, who wrote in Greek, and than whom none of the ancient Fathers was more learned, more honest, or more industrious, observed the same distinction, and reasoned from it in the same manner. In his Commentary on the beginning of John's Gospel, having noticed the difference between DIA and HYPO, and having observed that in Heb. i. 2. the expression (δι ου,) Through whom, denotes that God made the worlds, or ages, *through his Son*, he adds, "Thus also here, if all things were made *through* the Word, they were not made *by* the Word, but *by one more powerful and greater than the Word*."† Likewise Eusebius, the learned, ac-

* Against the universality of this rule only one passage presents much difficulty: 1 Cor. i. 9. δι ου εκληθητε, "*through* whom ye were called." But even here there is strong evidence for considering υπο as the true reading. See Griesbach. Even allowing DIA to denote the *original* cause in two or three passages, still the probability that it denoted the *instrumental* would be in any doubtful case as 100 to 1.

† Ουτω τοινυν και ενθαδε, ει παντα ΔΙΑ του Λογου εγενετο, ουχ ΥΠΟ του Λογου εγενετο, αλλ' ΥΠΟ κρειττονος και μειζονος παρα τον Λογον.

ORIGENIS OPERA, ED. DE LA RUE. v. IV. p. 60.

curate, and laborious author, to whom among the ancients the Christian world is chiefly indebted for the testimonies to the genuineness of the New Testament writings, and who could not possibly be mistaken about the common meaning of two prepositions, which he used daily and hourly in conversation and in books, explaining the commencement of John's gospel, uses these words ; " And when he says, in one place, (ver. 10.) that the *world*, and in another, (ver. 3.) that *all things*, were made *through him*, he declares the ministration of the Word to God. For, when the evangelist might have said, " All things were made *by* him," and again, " The world was made *by* him ;" he has not said " *By* him," but " *Through* him ;" in order that he might raise our conceptions to the underived power of the Father as the original cause of all things."* Lastly, the same distinction is noticed by Philo, the Jew, who was contemporary with our Saviour, who wrote in Greek, and in several parts of his writings expresses the difference between a supreme and a subordinate creator by the opposed use of these two prepositions. See Wetstein's Note on John i. 3.

For these reasons I think myself authorized to assert, that when a New Testament writer employs the preposition Dia to point out the cause of any effect, he means the *instrumental*, and refers to some other being, either expressly mentioned or contemplated, who is considered as the *first* or *original* cause. What then is the real import of the passages before cited, on the supposition that they

* Λεγων δε ΔΙ' αυτου γεγεννησθαι, ποτε μεν τον κοσμον, ποτε δε τα παντα, το υπηρετικον του Θεου παριστησι· Δυναμενος γουν ὁ ευαγγελιστης ειπειν, " Παντα ΥΠ' αυτου εγενετο," και αυθις, " Και ὁ κοσμος ΥΠ' αυτου εγενετο," ουχ " ΥΠ' αυτου," εφη, αλλα, " ΔΙ' αυτου ην." ἱν' ἡμας αναπεμψη επι την των ὁλων ποιητικην του Πατρος αυθεντιαν·

Eusebius de Eccles. Theol. lib. I. c. 20.

refer to the creation of the material universe? John i. 3. "All things were made *through Christ as an instrument*, but *by* God as their original contriver." Ver. 10. "The world was made *through Christ as a subordinate agent*." The passage from Colossians has the same import; "All things were created *through* him;" (τα παντα δι' αυτου, και εις αυτον, εκτισται·) and the passage from Hebrews, "By whom He made the worlds," can only signify, if it relates to the creation of the material universe at all, that *God* made the stars and planets *through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ*. The Greek words, employed in these passages, cannot bear to be interpreted so as to ascribe to our Lord the creation of the material world by his own uncommunicated omnipotence. They directly contradict the notion, that Christ stretched out the heavens alone, and made the world by himself. They clearly imply, whether they be supposed to refer to the formation of the Earth out of chaos, or to the Re-formation of its inhabitants through the influence of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ was only an *instrument* in the work, and not a *principal*.

In the longest, and, as it is commonly imagined, the clearest of these passages, (that from Colossians,) sufficient evidence is presented to enable the mere English reader to determine, whether in the creation of the material universe Christ displayed underived glory. After stating the fact, that all things were created *through* him, the Apostle assigns the *cause* of this fact in the following terms; "For *it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*." It appears, that the *reason* why Christ was employed in the work of creation was, that such was the pleasure of the Father, and that the Father bestowed upon him a full participation of his power and glory.

Thus, when we direct our view to the first supposed period of our Lord's existence, that preceding his incarna-

tion, we find that every passage of the New Testament, which ascribes to him *power* in that period, ascribes it to him as a being, inferiour to, and dependent upon, the Father.

II. The second period of our Lord's existence in which I proposed to contemplate the exercise of his power, is the period of his abode upon this earth. In the course of his publick ministry he exhibited the astonishing and awful proofs of supernatural power, by giving sight to the blind and reason to the insane, by healing the sick, raising the dead, and by many other stupendous miracles. Here again the question to be decided is, Whether he performed his mighty acts by underived and independent power, or whether he was enabled and authorized to exhibit them by God the Father. We may ascertain the truth partly from the opinions of those, who saw our Lord's miracles performed, but chiefly from his own clear declarations.

1. Does it appear, that the Apostles and hearers of our Saviour, who attended him during his ministry, and actually beheld the exercise of his stupendous power, were thereby induced to consider him as the supreme God?

The first example, which I shall produce in answer to this question, is the healing of the Paralytick related in the 9th chapter of Matthew. The conclusion, which modern Trinitarians draw from this miracle, and from the manner in which Jesus performed it, is, that he was the supreme God, and that he healed the sick of the palsy by his own underived omnipotence. On the contrary, the conclusion drawn by those, who saw the miracle performed, is thus stated by the Evangelist; (Mat. ix. 8.) "But, when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, *and glorified God, who had given such power unto men.*" Instead of adoring *Jesus* as the original author of the cure, they glorified *God*; and the reason of this was, because God "had given such power unto men." The same inference, though expressed

in different terms, was drawn by those, who witnessed the raising of the widow's son at Nain. We are informed, (Luke vii. 16.) that, when he was restored to life, "there came a fear on all, *and they glorified* GOD, saying, '*A great prophet is risen up among us*,' and, '*God hath visited his people*.'" Here, as in the former instance, we observe, that the people were induced by what they had seen to glorify, not Jesus, but God; and we are informed, that the reason was, because they conceived Jesus to be "a great prophet," whom God had raised up among them, and in giving whom he had "visited his people." Lest any one, inattentive to Scripture phraseology, should suppose the expression, "God hath visited his people," to convey the heathenish sentiment of the appearance of a God, clothed in human flesh and dwelling among men, I observe, that *God's visiting his people* means in Scripture nothing more than the arrival of some great benefit, conferred by the Almighty. Thus we read in the book of Ruth, (ch. i. 6.) that God "visited his people *in giving them bread*;" which only signifies, that he blessed them with a remarkably rich harvest.

Further, the Evangelist John, (ch. vi. 14.) having described the feeding of 5000 men with five loaves and two fishes, adds, "Then these men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth *that prophet*, that should come into the world;" and, having recorded (ch. ix. ver. 17.) the case of the blind man, to whom Jesus gave sight, he says, that the inference expressed by the man upon being questioned respecting the power and character of his benefactor was only this, *that he was a prophet*. "They say unto the blind man again, "What sayest thou of him, because he hath opened thine eyes?" He said, "*He is a prophet*."

The conclusion, suggested by the miracles of Jesus to his contemporaries, is most clearly stated in his conversation with Nicodemus, recorded in the 3d chapter of John's gospel. Nicodemus thus commences his address, "Rabbi, we know that thou art *a teacher come from God;* for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, *except God be with him.*" The more intelligent and impartial Jew, it appears, considered the miracles of Jesus as a proof, that he was "a teacher come from God," which is the exact light, in which they are regarded by all Unitarians. They reasoned, "No man can do such miracles as Jesus does," (they did not say, as a Trinitarian would, "Except he be God, as well as man," but,) "except God be with him."

Precisely in the same manner is the origin of our Lord's miraculous powers accounted for by the Apostle Peter, who, in Acts x. 38. is represented stating to Cornelius and his household the substance and foundation of the Christian faith. "That word," says he, "ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; *for God was with him.*" And on the day of Pentecost, when his mind was fully illuminated concerning the pre-eminent dignity of our Lord's character, he thus describes it to the assembled multitude in the name of the other Apostles; "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by (*through*) him." (Acts ii. 22.) The Apostle Peter therefore, even when "filled with the holy spirit," instead of considering the miracles, exhibited by our Saviour, as any evidence of his proper Deity, believed that he performed them, only because "God was with him," because "God had anointed him with the holy spirit and with power," and because in fact "*God did the*

miracles through him," God being the real author of the miracles, and Christ the medium, through the instrumentality of whom they were exhibited. A circumstance, which throws a clear light upon this subject, is, that exactly the same account is given (Acts xv. 12.) of the way, in which *the Apostles* were enabled to perform miracles. "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring *what miracles and wonders* God *had wrought* among the Gentiles *by* (through) *them*." Conformable to this explanation is the view presented by the Apostle John at the conclusion of his gospel. After describing a great variety of miracles, exhibited by our Lord, he thus explains his design in recording them; "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe, *that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John xx. 30, 31.) We see, that the beloved disciple, who always spoke of his master in the most glowing terms of admiration and affection, and who wrote his history, when many were disposed to fall away from the faith, in order to prevent their love from waxing cold, never regarded the miracles of Christ as a proof that he was God, but only as a proof, that he was *the Messiah, the Son of God*.

Let the candid reader now ask himself, Are Unitarians to be blamed for denying that the miracles of Christ evince his proper Deity, when it appears from the New Testament, that they were never so regarded by the beloved John, by the zealous Peter, nor by any of the apostles and first disciples of our Lord? The *Jews*, whose nation had been signalized by the display of miracles during many former ages, and who doubtless were best able to judge of the nature of their testimony; the *Apostles*, who attended

our Lord during his ministry for the express purpose of being qualified to publish through the world the evidences of his dignity and authority; the *Primitive Believers*, who by beholding these miracles were converted to the faith of the gospel, and who must have felt the full force of the awful and authoritative *manner* in which they were performed; *the sick, the lame, the blind, the lunatick*, who were restored to perfect soundness of mind and body through the all-commanding efficacy of our Saviour's word; all these, with every motive powerfully working upon them of gratitude, of personal attachment, and of personal experience and actual inspection, only inferred from the miracles of Jesus, that "God was with him," that he was "a teacher come from God," "a prophet," and "the Messiah, the Son of God."

2. Having considered the inferences, derived from the miracles of Jesus by those, who saw them performed, let us, in the second place, inquire what account he himself gave of the power, by which he exhibited them.

If we appeal to his own declarations, we find him utterly disclaiming underived power, asserting in the plainest terms, that he could of his own self do nothing, and that whatever power he possessed was conferred upon him by his Father. Thus (Mat. xi. 27. Luke x. 22.) he says to his disciples, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." To the Jews he declares, (John v. 19, 30, 36.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *The son can do nothing of himself.*" "*I can of mine own self do nothing.*" "The works, *which the Father hath given me to finish*, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." And to his desponding Apostles he administers consolation by the following account of his divine authority; (John xiv. 10.) "The words, that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; *but the Father*, that dwelleth in me, *He doeth the works.*"

To these clear assertions we may add another testimony still more solemn. That the power, by which Jesus performed miracles, did not belong to him as his uncommunicated and inherent possession, is manifest from his prayer at the raising of Lazarus, and from the previous address of Martha. John xi. 21, 22. "Then said Martha unto Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died: but I know, that even now, *whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*" From the last words we may conclude, that Martha knew it to be the custom of Jesus to pray to God for the accomplishment of any miracle, which he wished to perform, and that God always granted his petition by performing the miracle through him. If however the address of Martha leaves this matter doubtful, all uncertainty is removed by what we read in the 41st, 42d, and 43d verses; "And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me; and I knew, that thou hearest me always; but because of the people, which stand by, I said it, that they may believe, that thou hast sent me:' and, when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.'" This passage proves, that our Saviour never performed any miracle without a prayer to God the Father, either tacit or expressed aloud, in which he acknowledged himself to be dependent upon him for power to perform the miracle. "I knew, that thou hearest me always." This implies that he "always" before exhibiting a miracle, uttered in his mind a prayer to God, and that God always acceded to his prayer. "But because of the people, which stand by, I said it, that they may believe, that thou hast sent me." This signifies, that at that time he uttered his prayer aloud, in order that the spectators, evidently perceiving his power to be derived from heaven, might believe, that he was the authorized ambassadour of God sent to declare his will to mankind.

With the account of the raising of Lazarus by Christ we may compare the account of the raising of Tabitha by the Apostle Peter. We are told, (Acts ix. 40.) that Peter, having sent away the people, and being left alone, "kneeled down and prayed, and, turning him to the body, said, 'Tabitha, arise;' and she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up." We have then two examples of miracles similar in their nature. They were also performed in the same manner, each in consequence of a prayer offered up to the supreme God. In the case of Peter it will be admitted, that the bare performance of the miracle was far from proving his Divinity, and that the *way*, in which he performed it, proved him to be dependent upon God for the power exhibited. If these conclusions be just and inevitable in the case of Peter, they must be equally so in the case of Christ. The prayer, which Jesus offered up to God the Father at the tomb of Lazarus, proved him to be dependent upon God the Father for the power, by which he restored his friend to life; and, since his expressions imply, that he never performed any miracle without a similar acknowledgment of dependence, it follows from this circumstance, as well as those previously noticed under this head, that the power, which he displayed in so awful a manner during his publick ministry, was not inherent, but derived.

If then we search the Scriptures to know, whence he had his mighty works, we find both from the inferences deduced by all who saw them, and from his own express and solemn declarations, that he did not, and could not, perform them by any power belonging originally to himself, but that they were wrought by the power of God the Father, residing in him, and operating through him.

III. The 3d period of our Lord's existence, in which I proposed to consider the exercise of his power, is that sub-

sequent to his ascension into heaven. The state, to which he has been exalted, is described in the New Testament in the most elevated language, but is uniformly represented as the gift and the appointment of a superiour Being, namely, God the Father.

In the first place, Jesus himself gave this representation of his approaching glory. "Ye," said he to his Apostles, "are they, who have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, *as my Father hath appointed unto me.*" Luke xxii. 28, 29. From this assertion it is clear, that, in the kingdom here spoken of, Christ is a minister, subordinate to God the Father, and appointed by him, in the same manner as the Apostles were subordinate to, and appointed by, Christ. This agrees with the remark of the Evangelist John, by which he describes the feelings of our Lord in the contemplation of his sufferings and of his consequent glory and dominion; "Jesus knoweth, *that the Father had given all things into his hand*, and that he was from God, and went to God." John xiii. 3. In the immediate prospect of his death, and considering it as the passage to his glory, "he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee; *as thou hast given him power over all flesh*, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John xvii. 1, 2. The last injunction, which he gave to his disciples, the most splendid description, which he ever uttered, of his future glory and dominion, consisted only in saying, "All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth." Mat. xxviii. 18. And in the book of Revelation, (ch. ii. 26, 27.) where he is represented "giving" to his faithful servants "*power over the nations*," still he only gives that which he had received, "*Even*," says he, "*as I received of my Father.*"

In the book of Acts, which contains an account of the various miracles, performed by the Apostles in consequence of the gift of the holy spirit bestowed upon them, we find them constantly teaching, not only that they received their miraculous endowments from the Lord Jesus, but that he received the power of conferring those endowments from the Father. Peter, in the name of the Apostles, thus explains to the astonished multitude the source of those extraordinary powers, with which they were gifted on the day of Pentecost. "This Jesus," says he, after speaking of his death, "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses: therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, *and having received of the Father the promise of the holy ghost*, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts ii. 32, 33. A little after he says to the Jews, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly *that God hath made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, *both Lord and Christ*." ver. 36. In like manner he accounts for his ability to heal a lame man in the name of Jesus, saying, "The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, *hath glorified his servant Jesus*;" (Acts iii. 13.) and, when brought before the Jewish Sanhedrim, he says, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour*." Acts v. 30, 31. Thus the Apostles, in the course of their preaching, uniformly asserted, that the power, which our Lord exercised after his ascension into heaven by conferring upon them their miraculous gifts, did not originally belong to him in his own nature, but was bestowed upon him by God the Father. "From the Father" he is said to have "received the promise of the holy spirit." God "made him both Lord and Christ," "glorified" him, and "exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour."

In the same manner the Apostle Paul (Eph. i. 19—22.) speaks at large of the "*mighty power of God*, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, *and set him at his own right hand* in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; *and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church.*" In connexion with this passage I shall quote another from the same author, which agrees with it in attributing the present exaltation of our Saviour entirely to the will and appointment of God the Father. Phil. ii. 9—11. After speaking of the virtuous humiliation and obedience of Christ, the Apostle says, that, as the reward of his obedience, "*God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name*, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, *to the glory of God the Father.*" In like manner the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews asserts, (ch. i. 2.) that "*God hath appointed Jesus heir of all things;*" and the Apostle Peter (1 Peter i. 21.) affirms, that "God raised up Christ from the dead, *and gave him glory.*" These passages ascribe to Jesus transcendent glory and extensive dominion. But they all assert in the most clear and positive terms, that the *giver* of that glory, the fountain of that dominion, is the Supreme God, the Father, and they contain no intimation, that the power and dignity of our Saviour originate in any respect from his own eternal and inherent perfection. The doctrine of these passages is, that "God hath highly exalted him;" that God "hath set Jesus at his own right hand in the heavenly places;" that God "hath put all things under his feet;" that God "hath given him

glory and a name, which is above every name ;" that God "hath appointed him heir of all things," and "made him to be the head over all things to the church."

The present exalted state of our Saviour is in many passages of the New Testament described by saying, that he "*stands*," or that "*he sitteth at the right hand of God.*"* This expression is evidently figurative. Its signification however is very precise and determinate. It denotes, that our Lord is endowed with great authority, but that he derives that authority from God the Father, and exercises it in subjection to him. There is not in the Bible any figure of speech more common or more appropriate than that, which represents the sovereignty of God, as the moral governor of mankind, by saying *that he sits upon a throne.* But in the courts of eastern monarchs the person, who sat or stood at the right hand of the sovereign, was his prime-minister, who was appointed by the monarch to hold the next rank to himself in administering the affairs of his government. When therefore the prophets and holy men of old saw in vision, as was the case with the martyr Stephen, or pictured in their own minds by the power of imagination, the one God, the Father, seated upon a throne, and his son, Jesus Christ, sitting or standing at his right hand, the representation implied, that Jesus acted in subjection to the Father as Supreme, and that he was appointed by the Father to be, under himself, the head of his moral administration. It denoted therefore in Jesus high and extensive power relatively to men, but inferiority relatively to God.

The inferiority of Jesus to the Father in his present state of glory is asserted without a figure in those passages,

* Mat. xxii. 44. xxvi. 64. Mark xiv. 62. xvi. 19, 20. Luke xxii. 69. Acts ii. 33, 34. v. 31. vii. 55, 56. Rom. viii. 34. Col. iii. 1. Heb. i. 3. viii. 1. x. 12. xii. 2. 1 Peter iii. 22.

which speak of his *intercession*. Rom. viii. 34. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession for us*." Heb. vii. 25. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth *to make intercession for them*." It is in the nature of things impossible, that the Supreme God can either pray, or give thanks, or *intercede;* because there is not in the universe any greater being, before whom he can appear as a suppliant either for himself or others. The intercession of Christ therefore in his exalted state, while it is adapted to raise the highest sentiments of mingled gratitude and veneration towards him, proves, that he is not God, but dependent upon the Father for the accomplishment of his desires.

It will now be proper to consider the glorious offices, which all Christians expect the Lord Jesus to execute, of raising the dead and conducting the final judgment of mankind. Unitarians assert, that Jesus is empowered and ordained to fulfil these exalted offices by the only true God, the Father. Their doctrine is established by the following passages. John v. 22. "*The Father* judgeth no man, *but hath committed all judgment unto the Son*."—Ver. 25—27. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; FOR, as the Father hath life in himself, *so hath he given to the Son* to have life in himself, *and hath given him authority to execute judgment also*, because he is the son of man." In this passage we are informed, first, that Jesus Christ will raise the dead; and, secondly, we are informed of the *reason*, why he will display such stupendous power, viz. "*because the Father hath given it to him, and hath also given him authority to execute judgment*."

When the Apostle Peter explains the nature and design of the Gospel to the devout Cornelius, he thus states the commission, which had been given to the Apostles respecting the chief substance of their preaching; (Acts x. 42.) "He commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify, that it is he, *who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.*" St. Paul, in declaring the great truths of the Christian religion to the Athenians, affirms, (Acts xvii. 31.) that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man, *whom he hath ordained*, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." The same Apostle asserts in his Epistle to the Romans, (ch. ii. 16.) that "God shall judge the secrets of men *by Jesus Christ;* properly translated, it is, "THROUGH *Jesus Christ*," and signifies that God will judge mankind through Jesus Christ as a subordinate agent. Precisely in the same manner he limits the agency of Christ in raising the dead; (2 Cor. iv. 14.) "Knowing that he, who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also *by Jesus;*" here likewise the proper translation is "THROUGH *Jesus*," representing our blessed Lord as an instrument, employed by the Supreme Being to effect this great renovation. These *clear and decisive* passages teach us how to understand those, which speak of the exercise of Christ's power in raising the dead and of his authority in executing judgment, without either denying or expressly asserting, that such power and such authority were committed to him by the Father, and that in the exercise of them he was only a delegated agent.

I close the evidence for the *derivation* of Christ's power and his inferiority to the Father, with the remarkable language of the Apostle Paul in his first Epistle to the Corin

thians; (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.) "Then, (that is, after the general resurrection) cometh the end, when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till He hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy, that shall be destroyed, is death. For 'He hath put all things under his feet.' But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest, that He is excepted, who hath put all things under him. *And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that hath put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*" The Apostle here teaches, not only that all the power, at present exercised by our Saviour, is conferred upon him by God the Father, who is said to have "put all things under his feet," but that, when the great and benevolent purposes, for which he is invested with that power, have been fully answered, and all the designs of his mediatorial office finally accomplished, he will deliver up the kingdom and resign the authority granted to him.

I have now produced, or referred to, every passage of the New Testament, which speaks of the power of Christ. I have considered the exercise of his power in three distinct periods of his existence; first, the period, preceding his incarnation; secondly, the period of his ministry upon this earth; and thirdly, the period subsequent to his ascension into heaven. We have found it to be the uniform doctrine of the New Testament, that, in all these successive states, he is inferiour to God the Father, and possesses no power or authority, but by derivation from the Father. If therefore there be any truth in Scripture, or any intelligible meaning in the words of Christ and his Apostles, the Unitarian doctrine is now fully and irrefragably proved, *viz.* that all

the power, by which our Saviour was ever distinguished, did not originally belong to him in his own nature, but was given to him by the only true God, the Father.

Perhaps I may be blamed for degrading the character of the Saviour. To this I answer, that I use no language and make no assertion concerning him, which I do not find constantly employed by himself and his apostles, and which does not appear necessary to vindicate the unrivalled glory, the supreme, underived, and independent power, of the one living and true God, who was and who is and who is to come, the Almighty.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE USE OF THE PHRASES "HOLY SPIRIT," &c. IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

THE various applications of the word "*spirit*" in the New Testament have been viewed by learned theologians, as presenting great difficulties. I confess with respect to myself, that I do not clearly understand several passages, in which this term occurs, and think it better to remain in doubt than to form an opinion too precipitately. I must therefore remind the reader to exercise his own judgment upon what I shall advance in this as well as in every other chapter of my volume. Notwithstanding the difficulty of explaining some particular passages, (a difficulty, which oppresses the Trinitarians as much as their opponents,) I conceive, that the doctrines, which I shall state under the three following heads, are fully established, and that the word *spirit* is never applied by the Sacred Writers, as it is by the Orthodox of modern times, to an intelligent being, distinct from God the Father, co-equal and co-eternal with him, and like him possessed in an infinite degree of all natural and moral perfections.

I. In the first place, there is reason to believe, that the phrases "*Holy Spirit*," and "*Spirit of God*" are used in the Sacred Scriptures to signify THE ONE TRUE GOD, THE FATHER.

It was the object of the three first Chapters of this 2d Part, to prove those two leading principles of the Unitarian creed, that there is only one person in the Godhead, and that that one person is the Father. I now remark, that in

various passages of Scripture, the phrases "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of God" are only other names for the same unrivalled Being.

That this should be the case is perfectly natural. "God is a spirit," and he is "Holy;" why then should he not be called, "*The Holy Spirit?*"

It is very common in Scripture to employ "*the spirit of a person*" in order to denote *the person himself*. Thus St. Paul says to his Christian brethren, (1 Cor. xvi. 17, 18.) "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus;—for they have refreshed *my spirit and yours;*" that is, "they have refreshed *me and you.*" The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians and that to Philemon conclude with this benediction; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be *with your spirit.*" Most of his other epistles however conclude thus; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be *with you.*" There can be no doubt, that both expressions have the same signification. "*Your spirit*" means the same with "*You.*"

Since therefore "*the spirit of a person*" is a phrase employed to denote *the person himself*, "*The spirit of God*" may naturally mean *God himself.* In the following passage this periphrasis is employed in speaking both of man and of God. 1 Cor. ii. 11. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save *the spirit of man*, which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." The meaning of the verse is evidently this; "As no one is acquainted with the secret purposes of a man, *except the man himself*, so no one is acquainted with the secret purposes of God, *except God himself.*" Thus *the Spirit of Man* signifies *the Human Mind;* and, in like manner, *the Spirit of God* signifies *the Divine Mind.*

When Elihu, in the book of Job, asserts, (ch. xxxiii. 4.) "*The Spirit of God* hath made me," he doubtless means,

"*God* hath made me." In the 139th Psalm the omnipresence of God is described in the following beautiful and sublime language; (ver. 7.) "Whither shall I go *from thy spirit?* or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (ver. 8.) "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." Here it may be remarked, that "*thy spirit*" and "*thy presence*" are employed in the former verse, as equivalent to the single word "*thou*" in the latter. The same sense would have been conveyed, if the first question had been, "Whither shall I go from *thee?*" or, if the last verse had been, "If I ascend up into heaven, *thy spirit* is there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, *thy spirit* is there." The Spirit of God here signifies *the spiritual and intelligent substance of God.* The Prophet Isaiah (Isa. lxiii. 10.) thus describes the disobedience of the Israelites, and the consequent displeasure of their holy God. "But they rebelled, and vexed *his holy spirit;* therefore *he* was turned to be their enemy, and *he* fought against them." *The holy spirit of God* is employed in the first part of the verse to denote the same being, who is called by the single pronoun "*He*" in the latter part, and the LORD, or Jehovah, in many places of the same chapter. These examples from the Old Testament appear sufficient to prove, that in Scripture language the expressions "*Holy Spirit*" and "*Spirit of God*" are sometimes used to signify GOD HIMSELF.

I shall now produce all the passages of the New Testament, which seem to be most easily and naturally explained upon this principle, taking the liberty to use the word "*Spirit*" for the sake of uniformity in every quotation, whether PNEUMA be so translated in the Common Version, or by the almost obsolete word "*Ghost.*"

In Acts v. 3, 4. we are informed that Peter addressed Ananias in the following terms; "Ananias, why hath Satan

filled thine heart *to lie to the Holy Spirit*, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and, after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*" In this speech of the Apostle, to "lie unto the Holy Spirit," and to "lie unto God," appear to be synonymous expressions. Perhaps it may be proper to interpret in the same manner the expression of Peter in the 9th verse, "How is it, that ye have agreed together *to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?*" We may consider this phrase as parallel to the expressions "*to tempt God*" and "*to tempt the Lord*," which we find in other parts of Scripture.

The following passages resemble one another in representing the Holy Spirit *as saying or speaking words, which were uttered through Prophets* under the Old Testament dispensation. Acts i. 16. "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, *which the Holy Spirit by* (through) *the mouth of David spake before* concerning Judas." Acts xxviii. 25. "Well *spake the Holy Spirit by* (through) *Esaias the Prophet* unto our fathers, *saying*, 'Go unto this people,'" &c. Heb. iii. 7. "As *the Holy Spirit saith*, 'To-day if ye will hear his voice,'" &c. Heb. x. 15, 16. "*The Holy Spirit also is a witness to us;* for, after he had *said* before, 'This is the covenant that I will make,'" &c. If we compare these passages with numerous others, in which it is asserted of a Scripture, that GOD, or THE LORD, *spake it through the Prophet*, we shall see reason to believe, that *the Holy Spirit* is in these instances *another name for* GOD. In like manner, (Acts xxi. 11.) the Prophet Agabus introduces a communication, supernaturally suggested to his mind, with the expression, "*Thus saith the Holy Spirit,*" which appears exactly parallel to the expression often used by other Prophets, "*Thus saith God.*"

In the above mentioned cases, the suggestions of the Spirit were uttered aloud by the Prophet, or committed by him to writing, he serving as the organ to *publish* the thoughts of the Divinity. In many other cases, a purpose or sentiment was suggested to a Prophet *merely for the direction of his own conduct.* The language of the Scriptures in such instances commonly is, that *God speaks to him*, not that God speaks *through* him to others. We find in the New Testament several examples of this kind, in which *the Holy Spirit* is said to speak, and from a comparison of these with the other cases of supernatural, but silent, suggestion, in which *God* is said to speak, I think it probable, that *the Holy Spirit* is used in these passages *as another name for the One True God.* The passages I allude to are the following: Acts viii. 29. Then *the Spirit said unto Philip*, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Acts x. 19. "While Peter thought on the vision, *the Spirit said unto him*, "Behold, three men seek thee." xi. 11, 12. "There were three men, already come into the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me, and *the Spirit bade* me go with them, nothing doubting." xiii. 2—4. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, *the Holy Spirit said*, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them."—"So they, being sent forth *by the Holy Spirit*, departed unto Seleucia." xx. 23. "Save that *the Holy Spirit witnesseth* in every city, *saying*, that bonds and afflictions abide me." 1 Tim. iv. 1. "Now *the Spirit speaketh* expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." In each of these cases a sentiment or an action is suggested to the mind of the inspired person, and *the words*, expressive of that sentiment or action, are also suggested by the same extraordinary influence. The obvious way of denoting the origin of such ideas in the mind, is to say, that

God speaks these things to the person inspired. In the examples before us it is said, that "*the Holy Spirit,*" meaning God, "spake," "bid," or "witnessed."

The other examples, in which "the Holy Spirit" appears to be but another name for the Father, are the following. The reader will find upon examination, that, if instead of this phrase he substitutes the word "*God,*" the sense will be complete, and the language conformable to the usual style of the Scriptures. Luke ii. 26. Acts xv. 28. xx. 28. 1 Cor. ii. 11—14. Eph. iv. 30. Heb. ix. 8. and especially, 1 Cor. xii. 6—11. where the Apostle, speaking of the various supernatural endowments of the first Christians, says, that "the same GOD worketh all in all," and shortly after, "But all these worketh that one and the self-same SPIRIT, dividing unto every man severally *as he will.*"

When the names "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of God" are used to denote the one Supreme Deity, it is probable, that they are to be understood as particularly referring to his extraordinary influences either upon the physical or the moral world. With respect to all these passages I have however expressed myself with hesitation, because to some it may appear more proper to explain them under the third head, namely, as personifications of the Divine influence. When I come to that branch of the subject, I shall again briefly notice them. I now observe,

II. Secondly, that the phrases "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of God" are used in the Scriptures to denote *the supernatural influence of God,* or, in other words, *Inspiration with the gifts and powers attending it.*

This application of the expressions is as natural as the use of them already mentioned. The original meaning of the Greek word PNEUMA, translated *Spirit,* is *a Blowing,* or *a Breathing.* Hence it is employed by a simple and

obvious transition to denote a Divine *Afflatus*, *Inspiration*, or *Influence*. Nay, these words correspond to PNEUMA not only in their common meaning, but also in their etymology. An Afflatus is *a Blowing to* any thing; an Inspiration is *a Breathing into;* an Influence is *a Flowing into*. The most *exact and literal* sense of the phrase "Spirit of God" is therefore the *Inspiration* of God.

The proper meaning of PNEUMA is illustrated by the account, given in the Gospel of John, of the manner, in which Jesus by the appointment of God communicated supernatural powers to his disciples. John xx. 21, 22. "Then said Jesus to them again, 'Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' And, when he had said this, *he breathed on them*, and saith unto them, '*Receive ye the holy spirit.*' The correct translation of the last words is, "Receive ye the holy *breathing*." This explains the intention of the act of breathing, or (as the verb εμφυσαω more properly signifies) *blowing*, upon the disciples, which was to afford an external sensible symbol of the passage of energies, powers, and influences, from Jesus to them.

These observations may illustrate the fact, that among all the derivative applications of the term PNEUMA, the use of it to signify the extraordinary communication of knowledge and power is perhaps the most simple, easy, and natural.

The instances of the use of the word "Spirit" in this sense are very frequent in the Old Testament. See, for example, Gen. xli. 38, 39. Ex. xxxi. 3. xxxv. 31. Num. xi. 17, 25, 26, 29. xxiv. 2. Dan. v. 11, 12. But it will be desirable, for the sake of brevity, to consider its occurrence in the New Testament only, and to divide the examples of its application in this sense into distinct classes.

1. In various passages of the Christian Scriptures, a person is said to be "filled with the holy spirit," or "full of

the holy spirit." See Luke i. 15, 41, 67. iv. 1. Acts ii. 4. iv. 8, 31. vi. 3, 5. vii. 55. ix. 17. xi. 24. xiii. 9, 52. Eph. v. 18. To say, that any one was "*filled with God*," or "*full of any person*," would evidently be a strange and unnatural expression. But what places it beyond a doubt, that the *holy spirit* means in these passages only powers, gifts, and influences, is, that in the same Scriptures the terms "filled" and "full" are repeatedly applied to denote the existence of mere *qualities:* and, as all the above passages except one are cited from St. Luke, so the application of the terms "filled" and "full" to other qualities is particularly frequent in the histories of the same author, which circumstance enables us to apply Mr. Wardlaw's excellent rule, (p. 37.) "that a writer is the best interpreter of his own phraseology."

We find these terms applied to denote properties, either *good* or *bad*. Jesus Christ is described as "full of *grace and truth ;*" John i. 14. Persons are said to have been "filled with *wisdom ;*" Luke ii. 40. "filled with *knowledge ;*" Rom. xv. 14. Col. i. 9. "filled with *joy ;*" Acts ii. 28. Rom. xv. 13. 2 Tim. i. 4. "filled with *comfort ;*" 2 Cor. vii. 4. "filled with *the fruits of righteousness ;*" Phil. i. 11. "full of *goodness ;*" Rom. xv. 14. "full of *good works and alms-deeds ;*" Acts ix. 36. Men are described as "filled with *wrath, fear, madness, wonder and amazement, indignation and envy*, Luke iv. 28. v. 26. vi. 11. Acts iii. 10. v. 17. xiii. 45. xix. 28. One man is said to have been "full of *leprosy*," Luke v. 12. and another "full *of all subtilty and all mischief ;*" Acts xiii. 10.

The use of the phrase "*holy spirit*" in connexion with the adjective "*full*" is further elucidated by its occurrence in conjunction with other words in the same clause of a sentence, where persons are said to be full of the holy spirit AND *of some other quality*. Let the reader consult the 6th chapter of Acts. He will find in the 3d verse, that the

twelve Apostles direct the disciples "to look out among them seven men of honest report, *full of the holy spirit* AND WISDOM." In ver. 5. Stephen, one of the seven chosen, is described as "a man *full* OF FAITH *and of the holy spirit.*" In ver. 8. the same ideas are conveyed, with a slight variety of expression, by saying, that "Stephen, *full* OF FAITH AND POWER, did great wonders and miracles among the people." Here the word "*power*" seems to be used as synonymous to the expression "*holy spirit.*" In ver. 10. it is added, that the Jews "were not able to *resist* THE WISDOM AND *the spirit*, by which he spake." "The wisdom and the spirit" therefore were both *properties*, and were both *resisted* as properties. In like manner, (Acts xi. 24.) Barnabas is said to have been "full *of the holy spirit* AND OF FAITH;" and, (Acts xiii. 52.) we are told, that "the disciples were *filled* WITH JOY *and with the holy spirit.*"

From these considerations it is indisputable, that, when any one is in Scripture affirmed to be *full of*, or *filled with, the holy spirit*, the idea of the *personality* of that holy spirit is entirely excluded. It denotes only *qualities*, or *states of mind*.

2. In the following passages, persons are said to *receive* the holy spirit, John vii. 39. xx. 22. Acts ii. 38. viii. 15, 17, 19. x. 47. xix. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 12. 2 Cor. xi. 4. Gal. iii. 2, 14. *To receive a divine person* is an idea, which cannot enter the mind. But to receive *a power, a disposition, an affection*, is a natural and intelligible phrase.

One of the instances, here referred to, merits a particular consideration. Acts xix. 2. When Paul asked the disciples at Ephesus, "Have you received the holy spirit, since ye believed?" They replied, "We have not so much as heard, whether there be any holy spirit." They evidently meant, that they had not been informed of the communication *of miraculous gifts and powers*. For of the existence of God they could not be ignorant.

As in this class of passages the holy spirit is spoken of as "received," so

3. In the following instances, it is asserted to have been "*given*:" Luke xi. 13. John iii. 34. Acts viii. 18. xi. 17. xv. 8. Rom. v. 5. 2 Cor. i. 22. v. 5. 1 Thes. iv. 8. 1 John iii. 24. iv. 13.

In the first of these passages, from the Gospel of Luke, the words of Jesus to his disciples are, "If ye then, being evil, know how to *give good gifts* unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father *give the holy spirit* to them, that ask him?" In the parallel passage of the Gospel of Matthew, (Mat. vii. 11.) the last clause is thus varied; "How much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, *give good things* to them that ask him?" The holy spirit therefore consisted of "good gifts," or "good things."

The second of the passages, here cited, speaks of the spirit as *given by measure;* which not only shows, that it was a *gift*, but that it might be imparted *in various degrees.* It must therefore signify *Divine inspiration*, of which some have had one measure, and some another.

In Acts xi. 17. the Apostle Peter expressly calls the holy spirit *a gift.* "Forasmuch as God," says he, "*gave them the like gift.*"

4. A fourth class of passages consists of those in which the holy spirit is figuratively represented as something *showered down* upon the favoured individuals.

In Acts ii. 17, 18. God is said to "*pour out of his spirit* upon all flesh;" and, in Acts x. 45. the expression is, that "on the Gentiles *was poured out the gift of the holy spirit.*" In his Epistle to Titus, (ch. iii. 5.) Paul speaks of "the holy spirit, which God *hath shed on us abundantly.*" That "the holy spirit" is here intended to denote *dispositions and influences*, is manifest, not only from the use of the word *shed*, which could not be applied to a *person*, and from the *abun-*

dance of the gifts bestowed, but also from the application of the same phrase by this author in speaking of the "love of God." Rom. v. 5. "The love of God," as he beautifully expresses himself, "is *shed abroad* in our hearts." If the *love of God* can be shed, or poured out, upon a man, so may also the other talents and affections, of which the holy spirit consisted. The Apostle Peter also (Acts ii. 33.) explains the extraordinary appearances of the day of Pentecost by saying to the assembled multitude, "Jesus, having received of the Father the promise of the holy spirit, hath *shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*" What did the persons present *see and hear?* They *saw* in the Apostles the display of sudden and supernatural knowledge; they *heard* languages before unknown to those, who used them. In these qualifications therefore consisted the holy spirit, which on that memorable day was showered upon the Apostles.

The figure is the same, where the holy spirit is said to *fall upon*, (Acts viii. 16. x. 44. xi. 15.) or to *come upon*, (Acts i. 8. xix. 6.) the persons inspired.

The expression, *to be baptized with the holy spirit*, denotes in like manner the copious effusion of divine gifts and influences; Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. John i. 33. Acts i. 5. xi. 16. and the same figure is employed by the Apostle Peter, when he asserts, (Acts x. 38.) that "God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth *with the holy spirit and with power.*" The ancient method of anointing among the Hebrews was by *pouring oil*, the emblem of richness and luxuriance, upon the head of him, who was elected to any civil or religious office. The effusion of oil was, I presume, intended as a visible symbol of the effusion of the dispositions and talents, included under the term "holy spirit."

To the same class of expressions we may refer the language of Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 13.) where, having observed, that Christians are all *baptized by one spirit* into one body, he adds, that all have been made "to *drink* into one spirit."

5. In several passages of the epistles of Paul, the holy spirit is spoken of as *dwelling* in inspired men.

The same Apostle speaks of "*faith*," (2 Tim. i. 5.) of the "*word of Christ*," (Col. iii. 16.) and of "*sin*," (Rom. vii. 17, 20.) as *dwelling* in persons; which proves that the phrase is used concerning gifts and dispositions. Although therefore the other interpretations might be chosen, (see 1 John iv. 12, 16.) if there were any occasion for it, we may properly understand the phrases, "holy spirit" and "spirit of God" in the following passages, as denoting the gracious *influences* of God, rather than God himself. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be, *that the spirit of God dwell in you*. Rom. viii. 9. See also verse 11. "Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that *the spirit of God dwelleth in you*;" 1 Cor. iii. 16. "That good thing, which was committed unto thee, keep *by the holy spirit, which dwelleth in us*;" 2 Tim. i. 14. In this last passage, "the holy spirit" must signify *powers and dispositions*, because Timothy is exhorted to use them as *instruments*, by means of which he may keep secure his Christian privileges and advantages.

6. I bring into a 6th class those passages, in which *the spirit* is represented *inciting* any one to go from place to place.

"Then was Jesus *led up of the spirit* into the wilderness;" Mat. iv. 1. "And immediately the spirit *driveth* him into the wilderness;" Mark i. 12. "Jesus, being full of the holy spirit, returned from Jordan, and was *led by the spirit* into the wilderness;" Luke iv. 1. "He *came by the spirit* into the temple;" Luke ii. 27. "The spirit of the Lord *caught away* Philip;" Acts viii. 39. "As many as are *led by the spirit of God*, they are the sons of God;" Rom. viii. 14. "If ye be *led by the spirit*, ye are not under the law;" Gal. v. 18.

The extraordinary influence of God upon man is often called an *Impulse*, because it *drives* or *impels* the person, who is subject to it; and nothing is more common than to speak of ourselves as *led* by particular views, motives, and dispositions. If therefore we understand the term *spirit* to denote gifts, affections, and energies, these expressions are suited to the usual forms of human speech.

As the first Christians were incited by the holy spirit to go from place to place, we find that the same influence occasionally *restrained* them. For it is said, (Acts xvi. 6, 7.) that Paul and Timothy "were forbidden of the holy spirit to preach the word in Asia," or more properly, "*were restrained by the holy spirit* from preaching the word in Asia," and that "they assayed to go into Bithynia, but *the spirit suffered them not.*"

7. Under a 7th head I bring the remaining passages, in which "the holy spirit," or "the spirit of God," appears to me to signify Divine Inspiration with the gifts and powers attending it. I shall leave the diligent reader to examine them particularly for himself. He will in general find, that the sense will be clear, and the language natural, if instead of these phrases he substitutes the synonymous expressions, *Divine Inspiration*, or *Influence of God.*

Mat. i. 18, 20. iii. 16. xii. 18, 31, 32. xxii. 43. Mark i. 10. iii. 29. xii. 36. Luke i. 35. ii. 25. iii. 22. iv. 14, 18. xii. 10. John i. 32, 33. iii. 5, 6. Acts i. 2. ii. 4. ix. 31. xi. 28. xix. 21. xx. 22. xxi. 4. Rom. i. 4. viii. 23, 26. ix. 1. xiv. 17. xv. 13, 16, 19. 1 Cor. ii. 4. vi. 11. vii. 40. xii. 3. 2 Cor. iii. 3, 18. vi. 6. xiii. 14. Gal. v. 16, 17, 22, 25. Eph. i. 13. ii. 18. iii. 5, 16. vi. 18. Phil. i. 19. ii. 1. Col. i. 8. 1 Thes. i. 5, 6. v. 19. 2 Thes. ii. 13. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Heb. ii. 4. x. 29. 1 Peter i. 2, 12, 22. iv. 14. 2 Peter i. 21. Jude 19, 20. Rev. i. 10. iv. 2. xvii. 3. xxi. 10.

I might have drawn out this list to a greater length, if I had not been desirous of omitting all the passages, the interpretation of which was difficult or doubtful.

I shall conclude this part of the subject with considering four passages, two of which are parallel to, and explain, the others.

The Evangelist Luke relates a most interesting conversation, in which our Saviour refutes the charge, that he healed the demoniacks by intercourse with Beelzebub. He uses these words ; " But if I *with the finger of God* cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you :" Luke xi. 20. What are we to understand by " the finger of God ?" Undoubtedly the *operation*, *influence*, or communicated *energy*, of God. Let us then turn to the parallel passage in the Gospel of Matthew. " But, if I cast out devils *by the spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Mat. xii. 28. Every one, who believes, that the meaning of Jesus is accurately reported by both the Evangelists, will allow, that " the spirit of God" here signifies the same as " the finger of God," that is, the imparted energy of God.

St. Luke records the following address, delivered by Jesus to his disciples immediately before his ascension into heaven ; " Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you ; but tarry ye in the city, *until ye be endued with power from on high*." Luke xxiv. 49. But the Evangelist, at the commencement of the book of Acts, relates the same promise of Jesus more largely in the following terms ; " Being assembled together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, " which," saith he, " ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water ; but *ye shall be baptized with the holy spirit* not many days hence." Acts i. 4, 5. From the comparison of these two

passages it is evident, that "*to be baptized* with the holy spirit" was precisely the same thing as "to be endued with power from on high."

III. I now observe, in the third place, that the supernatural influence of God is sometimes *personified*; that is, it is spoken of, as if it were a person or intelligent being.

Personification is a common figure in all languages, but is in none so frequent as in those of the East. Hence almost all the common events and conditions of human life, and almost every power and disposition of the human mind is personified in the holy Scriptures. Considering therefore the very frequent mention of the Influence of God in the writings of the New Testament, it would have been truly surprising, if this affection had not been occasionally described as possessing personal properties: and, if we examine the passages, in which it is so represented, the figure will probably appear in no instance forced and unnatural, even to the ears of those, who are accustomed to the plainer diction of western countries.

Acts v. 32. The Apostle Peter, after speaking before the Jewish council of the death, resurrection, and exaltation, of Jesus, states in the following terms the evidence, by which the reality of these facts was established. "We are his witnesses of these things, *and so is also the holy spirit*, which God hath given to them that obey him;" that is, The Apostles were witnesses of facts, which they knew in consequence of their attendance upon Jesus during his ministry, and also *the miracles*, which God enabled them to perform, were witnesses of the truth of their assertions. That, in this passage, "the holy spirit" does not mean God, or any person, is evident, because it is described as *given by God*. The way, in which the miraculous endowments of the Apostles *bore witness* to their doctrine, is illustrated by the following assertions of Jesus Christ

himself: "*The works* which the Father hath given me to finish, *the same works that I do bear witness of me*, that the Father hath sent me;" John v. 36. "*The works*, that I do in my Father's name, *they bear witness of me*;" John x. 25. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but, if I do, *though ye believe not me, believe the works*;" ver. 37, 38. In these passages, as well as in the address of Peter, *miracles* are personified, and appealed to as the *witnesses* of certain facts. The only difference is, that in these passages they are called "*works*;" by Peter they are denominated "*the holy spirit*."

Another passage, which represents the spirit as *bearing witness*, is Rom. viii. 16. "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;" which signifies, "Our persuasion of the peculiar favour of God towards us is assured by the testimony of his gracious aid, direction, and consolation."

Other natural and appropriate personifications of the Divine influence we find in our Saviour's directions to his Apostles concerning the propagation of his gospel through the world. See Mat. x. 20. Mark xiii. 11. Luke xii. 12. He exhorts them to plead his cause with boldness and fortitude, when brought before kings and councils, and not to be anxious or hesitating about what they should speak, *since the holy spirit would teach them what to say*, and in fact not *they* would speak, but rather *the spirit of their heavenly Father* would speak in them. What language could be more animating or encouraging? What assurance could better support their resolution in every critical situation? When placed at the bar of justice as criminals, the present aid of God would guide their utterance; Divine Inspiration would speak through their lips, humbling the pride of the great and confounding the wisdom of the wise.

But by far the most remarkable example of the personification of the holy spirit occurs in the affectionate address of Jesus to his Apostles before his crucifixion. I shall produce the portions of the address, in which this personification occurs.

John xiv. 16, 17. "I will pray the Father, *and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth,* whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." In this passage the intelligent reader will observe, that the personification of the Divine aid is brought on *by degrees.* For, while it is called *a comforter,* it is also stated to be *a gift:* "I will pray the Father, and he shall *give* you another comforter." The phrase excludes the idea of the *real* personality of this other comforter, and ought to serve as a guide to the proper interpretation of the remainder of the address.

Ver. 25, 26. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. *But the comforter,* which is the holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

If these words were taken out of their connexion, and interpreted without any reference to the general doctrine of the Scriptures, they would teach the *real* personality of the holy spirit. But it must be observed, that even *here* the comforter is said to be *sent by the Father,* which would prove, that, if a person, he is inferiour to the Father.

Chap. xv. 26, 27. "But, when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *he shall testify*

of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

If this passage proves the personality of the spirit, or comforter, it also proves him to be subordinate to Jesus Christ; for Jesus is rep esented as *sending* him to the Apostles; and the person, who sends, is necessarily greater than the person sent. Those, who consider this passage as an instance of personification, will perceive in it a close resemblance to the first passage quoted under this head. Peter there asserts in the name of the Apostles, "*We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the holy spirit.*" But in the speech of Peter the spirit was proved to signify miraculous gifts; consequently it ought to be so understood in the parallel speech of Christ.

Ch. xvi. 6—15. In this passage, (which I omit quoting on account of its length,) not only is the comforter said to be *sent* by Christ, but it is also asserted, *that he would not speak of himself*, and would speak *whatsoever he should hear.*

If therefore our Lord's consoling promises of the comforter be considered apart from the rest of the Scriptures, they disprove the *Divinity* of the holy spirit, and afford very dubious evidence even of his *personality.* But, considered in connexion with the general doctrines of Scripture upon this subject, they appear only as an instance of personification. In this case indeed, the figure seems to be remarkably easy, appropriate, and natural. Whilst Jesus remained with his Apostles, *he* was their comforter; but, as he was about to depart from them, and saw that sorrow had filled their hearts, he tells them, that he would send to them in his own stead *another comforter, who would never leave them*, even the directing and preserving Influence of God upon their minds. The argument, which he employs to console them may be thus expressed; "A little

while *I* have been with you; *I* have been your comforter; *I* have guided, instructed, and defended you. Now I go to him that sent me, and ye shall see me no more. But I will send you instead of myself *another comforter, who will remain with you as long as you live.* Of his instruction, support, and consolation, you shall never be deprived."

We find another singular example of the personification of the holy spirit in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, ch. viii. 26, 27. "Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: *but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us* with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, *because he maketh intercession* for the saints according to the will of God."

If this passage proves the *personality* of the holy spirit, it also proves *his subjection to God.* For, if intercession be the employment of *a person*, it is also the employment of *an inferiour.* But the true meaning of the writer is, that, as we know not what we ought to pray for, the Divine Influence, which lends assistance to all our infirmities, suggests to our minds the proper subjects of petition, and prompts us to address ourselves to God with a right disposition of mind, thus praying on our behalf, and making intercession for us.

On similar principles we may explain the exhortation, several times repeated in the book of Revelation. (See Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29. iii. 6, 13, 22.) "He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches." John was writing an account of what he saw and heard *in vision*, that is, by extraordinary operations of God upon his mind. He therefore calls on Christians to listen attentively to what was *dictated by Divine Inspiration.*

The only other passage of the New Testament, in which I find the Divine influence personified, is Rev. xiv. 13. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord from henceforth;' 'Yea,' *saith the spirit*, (that is, The Divine Influence suggests to me this response,) 'Yea, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'"

I have to add under this division of the subject, that some persons may be disposed to consider as personifications of the Divine influence several of those passages, which were formerly explained as referring to the One True God, the Father. Although it appears to me, that, by interpreting the phrases "holy spirit" and "spirit of God" in those passages *as other names of the Father*, we adopt an explanation extremely easy and natural, and free from every objection, yet I allow, that most of them may be explained *as personifications of the Divine influence* without doing any violence to the rules of criticism. The reader is therefore left at liberty to reduce them to this 3d head, if he sees fit.

Nor ought I to omit mentioning, that some very excellent persons have been induced by those passages, which speak of the holy spirit as a person, to believe in a *created and subordinate* holy spirit, directed and empowered by God to afford all necessary aid, comfort, and illumination to his creatures. Those, who think there is sufficient ground for this opinion, may hold it without infringing the great article of the Unity of God. For evidence might be collected to prove the inferiority of such a being to the Father almost as copious and overwhelming as that, which proves the subordination of Jesus Christ.

But, whatever differences of opinion may exist on these minor questions, one thing is clear; that the Scriptures attribute to God the Father, *as their original author*,

all those blessings of wisdom, consolation and spiritual aid, which are supplied through the medium of Jesus Christ, or of the holy spirit. For *examples* of what I here assert, the reader is referred to the following passages; 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. Phil. ii. 13. 1 Thes. v. 23. 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. 1 Peter v. 10. He will find, that "the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation," and who "worketh in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ," is "*our God and Father*," "*the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*," "*the Father of mercies*," and "*the very God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus.*"

PART III.

INTRODUCTION.

In the 2d part, I have brought forward many hundred passages of Scripture, which, if viewed by an unbiassed mind and taken in their obvious sense, afford clear and direct testimony to the truth of the Unitarian doctrines. I shall now state and examine the opposite arguments, advanced by Trinitarians, and especially by Mr. Wardlaw; so that, by comparing the evidence, now to be considered, with that formerly adduced, every reader will be able to form a decision between the two contending systems.

CHAPTER I.

STATEMENTS OF WHAT THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IS, AND OF THE EVIDENCE REQUISITE IN EACH CASE TO PROVE IT.

Before we begin to consider the arguments, by which the doctrine of the Trinity is supported, it is necessary that we should understand, what that doctrine is. Otherwise we shall be using words without ideas, and cannot at all perceive, how any argument or observation applies to the subject.

This inquiry is attended with far greater difficulties than could be conceived by one, who is not acquainted with controversial theology. For, whilst nearly all Trinitarians have maintained, that their doctrine is inculcated by the most positive testimonies of the Word of God, and that the belief of it is necessary to the salvation of mankind, they themselves have engaged in the most violent disputes, and entertained the most discordant opinions concerning its nature. Without entering into all the explanations, proposed by eminent and learned Trinitarians, it will be sufficient to consider three, to which the rest may, with immaterial exceptions, be reduced. Two of these opposite statements are maintained by Mr. Wardlaw; the other he rejects. Besides showing, what the doctrine of the Trinity is according to these three accounts, I shall in this chapter point out the kind and degree of evidence, by which in each case it ought to be supported.

I. The first account of the Trinity, which I shall notice, is the *Sabellian;* so called, because it was held in the 3d century by a person of great distinction, named Sabellius, who had numerous followers. This hypothesis was revived in modern times by the celebrated mathematician and divine, Dr. Wallis. It received the sanction of the University of Oxford, and is probably held by many of those, who pass under the name of Trinitarians. The doctrine is thus stated in the words of Dr. Wallis; "A Divine Person is only a Mode, a Respect, or Relation of God to his creatures. He beareth to his creatures these three relations, modes, or respects, that he is their Creator, their Redeemer, and their Sanctifier. This is what we mean, and all we mean, when we say God is three Persons." Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 7.

To those, who hold this doctrine, I beg to propose the following questions.

Why do you call the three relations of God, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, three *persons*, although the term is not so used in Scripture, and none could be more unappropriate?

Why do you restrict yourselves to the number *three*, although God is not only the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of mankind, but bears towards them various other relations, being, for example, their Preserver, their Governour, and their Judge?

Why do you assert, that these three relations existed *from all eternity?* For how could God bear the relation of a Creator, before he had created any thing? or the relation of a Redeemer, before he redeemed mankind through Christ? or the relation of a Sanctifier, before there were any rational beings to sanctify?

You maintain, that the second person of the Trinity was *begotten* from the first, and that the third *proceeds* from the first and second. But what sense is there in the expression, that the relation of Redeemer was begotten from the relation of Creator, and that the relation of Sanctifier proceeds from the relations of Creator and Redeemer?

Lastly, Why do you *worship* three modes, or relations, of God, instead of worshipping God himself?

This doctrine is evidently nothing more than disguised Unitarianism. It is a melancholy proof, that its advocates love the praise of men more than the glory of God, and that they seek to skreen themselves from the odium and inconvenience, to which an open rejection of the Trinitarian system might expose them, by retaining its form and language, while they deny its substance.

Upon this view of the doctrine it is unnecessary to dwell any longer, because it is rejected by Mr. Wardlaw. With respect to the appellations of the three persons of the Trinity, "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," he

remarks, (p. 10.) "We do not consider them as expressive of a distinction, that is merely *official*, or as exhibiting *the same Divine Person under three different aspects.*"

II. In the second place, I shall state, what, I believe, is the genuine Trinitarian doctrine, believed by the great mass of the orthodox, defended by many able and learned divines, and maintained by Mr. Wardlaw through the larger part of his volume.

The only proper signification of the term *Person* is, *a Mind*, or *Intelligent Being*. When therefore it is asserted, that there are in the Godhead three distinct *Persons*, the proposition, if it has any meaning at all, must signify, that there are in the Godhead three distinct *Minds*, or *Intelligent Beings*. The doctrine of the Trinity is accordingly stated almost in these terms by one of the most learned and respectable dignitaries of the Church of England, Dr. William Sherlock. In his celebrated work, written in reply to the Unitarians, and entitled "A Vindication of the doctrine of the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity," he thus speaks; (sec. iv. p. 66, 67.) "It is plain the Persons are perfectly distinct, for they are Three distinct and infinite Minds, and therefore Three distinct Persons; for a Person is an intelligent Being, and to say, they are Three Divine Persons, and not Three distinct infinite Minds, is both heresy and non-sense: The Scripture, I'm sure, represents Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as Three intelligent Beings, not as Three Powers or Faculties of the same Being, which is down-right *Sabellianism;* for Faculties are not Persons, no more than Memory, Will, and Understanding, are Three Persons in One Man: When we prove the Holy Ghost to be a Person, against the Socinians, who make him only a Divine Power, we prove that all the Properties of a Person belong to him, such as Understanding, Will, Affections, and Actions; which shows what our notion of a Person is,

such a Being as has Understanding, and Will, and Power of Action, and it would be very strange, that we should own Three Persons, each of which persons is truly and properly God, and not own Three infinite Minds; as if any thing could be a God, but an infinite mind.

Mr. Wardlaw is no less explicit than Dr. Sherlock in maintaining, that the three Persons in the Godhead are perfectly *distinct*. He asserts, in his statements of the doctrine, (p. 10, 27, 28.) that there are in the Godhead "three *distinct* subsistences," called Persons; and, throughout his volume, he represents the three persons as sustaining different relations to mankind, performing different offices, and making covenants with one another. In his discourse "On the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit," he gives a most clear, ample, and correct account of the signification of the term *Person*. "What," says he, "do we mean by *a person?*—By *a person* we mean that, which *possesses personal* properties;" (p. 271;*) and afterwards, in a quotation from Paley, he explains those personal properties to be such as the following; "Contrivance," "Design," "Consciousness and thought," the faculty of "perceiving an end or purpose," and "the power of providing means and directing them to their end," "a centre, in which *perceptions* unite, and from which *volitions* flow." Having thus explained what is meant, when it is asserted, that the Holy Spirit is *a person*, he endeavours to prove, that the Scriptures attribute to this person, or "intelligent agent," not only Will, Understanding, Speech, &c. but also Omniscience, Omnipresence, Divine Power, and Eternal Existence. In short, Mr. Wardlaw's doctrine in this Discourse is, that the Third Person of the Trinity is a Mind, or Intelligent Being, possessed in an infinite degree of all

* ["The Holy Spirit is a person, an intelligent agent, a conscious and active subsistence."—WARDLAW, p. 279.—EDIT.]

Divine attributes.—That he holds the same doctrine concerning the *Second* Person is equally manifest. He assigns as a reason for not *proving* Jesus Christ to be a person, that his personality, *in the sense, in which the term "personality" is applied to the Holy Spirit*, was never disputed. (p. 270.) When therefore he calls the second of the three distinct subsistences *a person*, he means that that subsistence is *a distinct mind*, or *intelligent being:* and, in his 3d and 4th Discourses, he labours to prove, that this distinct intelligent Being is possessed of all Divine Perfections.—It is almost needless to remark, that he regards the First Person, called the Father, in the same light, namely, as a distinct Mind, possessing every natural and moral perfection in an infinite degree.

Thus Mr. Wardlaw fully adopts the opinion, stated by Dr. Sherlock in the above passage, that the three Persons of the Trinity are "*three distinct infinite Minds.*" Nor, I presume,* will he refuse his assent to the concluding remark of that quotation, *that each infinite mind is "a God;"* for the proper definition of *a God* is, *a self-existent and all-powerful Mind.* To assert therefore, that there are three such minds, is the same thing as to assert, that there are three Gods; and the charge of Tritheism, which was preferred against Dr. Sherlock, lies equally against Mr. Wardlaw.

If it be asked, What kind and degree of evidence would be sufficient to establish the doctrine of the Trinity, thus understood, I reply, No evidence whatsoever; not even the clearest declarations of the Scriptures themselves. For its own intrinsick absurdity is more decisive *against* it, than any contrary evidence could be *for* it. To use the words

* ["The Three persons have existed from eternity, equal, and mutually independent."—Wardlaw, p. 294.—Edit.]

of Priestley, it is a doctrine, "which councils and parliaments may decree, but which miracles cannot prove." It teaches, that one God is three Gods, one infinite Mind three infinite Minds. It asserts, that the Deity is one *in the same sense*, in which he is three; and this Mr. Wardlaw himself (p. 22) allows to be "an irreconcilable contradiction." Agreeably therefore to the axioms, laid down in the Chapter upon Mysteries, (P. I. ch. 4.) we ought to reject this doctrine, even though it were plainly stated in the Scriptures;* because it is in itself impossible, and because it contradicts one of the fundamental articles of both Natural and Revealed Religion, the Unity of God.

III. I come now to the third principal statement of the Trinitarian doctrine, *viz.* the opinion of those, who say, that the subject is so completely removed beyond the view of the human understanding, that it is impossible for us to form upon it any clear or accurate conceptions.

Trinitarians of this class disapprove of all attempts towards explaining the doctrine. When questioned upon the subject, they can scarcely be persuaded to declare, whether they consider the three persons of the Trinity as three distinct minds, or only as three relations, or aspects, of the same mind. The fact is, they are suspicious, that the doctrine will not stand the test of examination. They have a secret foreboding, that, if it be stated in clear terms, so as to become assailable by argument, it will fall to the ground. Its safety depends upon its entire removal from the field of discussion.

To this elusive representation of the doctrine Mr. Wardlaw has recourse. In the part of his volume, relating more directly to this subject, (that is, in the First and the begin-

* [Or, to speak more properly, the Scriptures themselves ought to be rejected, as Mr. Yates himself has elsewhere explained it. EDIT.]

ning of the Second Discourse,) he strives to render the doctrine of the Trinity invulnerable by reducing it to a shadow. We have seen, that, in the subsequent part of his work, he gives an exact account of the meaning of the term *Person* as applied to the Trinity; but he says here, that it is only used "*for want of a better word*," and that a "clear conception" of its precise import is utterly unattainable. Through more than the *latter half* of his volume, he treats the distinction of Persons in the Godhead as a clear and intelligible doctrine, endeavouring to prove, that they are personal agents, who enjoy all the perfections, and exercise independently of one another all the functions, of Deity; but *here* he asserts, that 'the nature and mode of that distinction" is perfectly incomprehensible. He *there* dwells in animated language upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as in the highest degree interesting to the affections, and influential upon the conduct, of men; but *here* he in fact confesses it to be an almost unmeaning sound. *There*, as we have seen, he maintains the persons of the Godhead to be one and three *in the same sense; here* he "does not pretend to know, or to say, *how* they are one, and *how* they are three." The greater part of his volume is filled with arguments and observations relating to the Trinity, in composing which he doubtless annexed some ideas to the words which he employed; but *here* he contends, that the doctrine cannot possibly be shown to contradict reason, because it is a thing, "*which we do not at all understand.*"

If it be asked, What evidence is proper to establish the doctrine of the Trinity thus represented, I recur, as before, to the principles laid down in the Chapter upon Mysteries. The assertion, that "in the unity of the Godhead there are three subsistences, or persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," is, in this case, a mystery *according to the second of the senses, there illustrated.* It is "a propo-

sition, to the terms of which no distinct ideas are annexed." Let us then apply our general maxims to this particular case.

We allow, that, although we be "*left in total ignorance*" *of the meaning of the proposition*, there may unquestionably be some hidden truth in it, perceptible to an angelick, or a Divine, understanding. If therefore it be uttered by one, who exhibits the clear proofs of supernatural inspiration, in deference to his Divine authority, we shall admit its truth. But our minds are forcibly impressed with the following considerations.

1. Of what use can this declaration be to us, if we connect no ideas with the terms, in which it is expressed? Concerning the abuse of the gift of tongues among the first Christians, St. Paul makes these remarks; (1 Cor. xiv. 7—9;) "Even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For, if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue *words easy to be understood*, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air." These observations have a clear and exact relation to the subject before us. How can the empty sound of unintelligible names have any influence upon our conduct? Can it console us in distress? Can it guard us against temptation? Can it guide us in the path of duty? No; it is addressed only to our outward ears, and not to our understandings. It can therefore exert no influence upon our minds; it can have no efficacy upon our practice.

2. We can have no sufficient warrant for believing, on the authority of the Scriptures, the unintelligible proposition that "there exist three persons in one God," unless we find

in the Scriptures *these very words.* Annexing no distinct ideas to the terms of the proposition, we cannot prove its truth by a comparison of those terms with other assertions or phrases, to which distinct ideas are attached. Thus the question may be brought to a speedy issue. Whatever assertions are contained in the Scriptures, we believe to be true, whether we understand them, or not. Let Trinitarians state *their* doctrines, as *we* state ours, *in the words of Scripture;* we shall then be agreed. Let them point out the Chapter and Verse, where the assertion is to be found, that "in the unity of the Godhead there are three subsistences, or persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" we shall believe that the proposition is as *true*, as it is *unintelligible.* But, if the Bible does not state the doctrine *in these very words*, we cannot be justified in believing it; because all reasoning, deduction, or inference, is from the nature of the case impossible.

3. We think it a contradiction in terms to say, that this incomprehensible doctrine is *revealed.* If it had put us into possession of any knowledge, of which we were before destitute; if it had thrown any additional light upon a subject, with which we were but partially acquainted; if it had introduced into our minds any new ideas, or strengthened any faint impressions; we might receive it with gratitude and reverence as a Divine Revelation. But we cannot with propriety give that name to a proposition, which makes nothing known to us, which neither revives old conceptions, nor suggests new ideas, and which, in short, wants all the characteristicks of TRUTH REVEALED.

I conclude these remarks on the three principal explanations of the Trinitarian doctrine, with the words of a most sensible and amiable man, which generally occur to my mind, whenever, in the course of my reading, I have the misfortune to meet with any mention of the Trinity;

"The schoolmen have much more of this jargon and canting language; and I envy no man the understanding these phrases; but to me they seem to signify nothing, but to have been words invented by idle and conceited men, which a great many ever since, lest they should seem to be ignorant, would seem to understand; but I wonder most, that men, when they have amused and puzzled themselves and others with hard words, should call this *explaining* things."

TILLOTSON'S SERMONS, V. II. p. 607.

CHAPTER II.

EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR A PLURALITY OF PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD.

In the former part of this volume, I endeavoured to prove, by arguments derived both from the appearances of Nature, and from the testimony of Revelation, that there exists but one Supreme mind, person, or intelligent being, who is alone uncreated and the creator of all other things, and who is the giver of all the powers and faculties, which belong to his creatures. In opposition to this doctrine, Mr. Wardlaw, with the generality of Trinitarians, maintains through the greater portion of his Discourses, that there exist three minds, persons, or intelligent beings, who are co-equal and co-eternal, and who independently of one another possess all the perfections, and exercise all the functions, of Deity. I have already observed, that, as this doctrine, held in conjunction with that of the Unity of God, implies an irreconcilable contradiction, it cannot be established by any evidence whatsoever. Nevertheless, for the satisfaction of candid inquirers, and to vindicate the Holy Scriptures from the charge of containing so great an absurdity, I shall state and examine the various arguments, by which Mr. Wardlaw, in common with the great mass of Trinitarians, endeavours to support it.

I. In the first place, he objects to the proof of the Unity of God, derived from the appearances of the material creation. He allows, that all nature presents the most decisive marks of "harmony of plan" and "unity of design." But he denies, (p. 9.) that these appearances prove the existence of "*only one designer*," since "*unity of counsel may*

subsist among a plurality of counsellors." He also affirms, that it is admitted by *the best writers on Natural Theology*, that the whole of their argument for the Divine Unity, drawn from harmony of plan in the universe, "goes no further than to a unity of counsel." Except Dr. Paley, whom Mr. Wardlaw quotes as one example of the truth of his remark, I know of no other author upon Natural Religion, who makes this concession. I have no doubt however, that Mr. Wardlaw has seen others, though I cannot imagine who they are. With respect to Dr. Paley, it should be considered, that he was (at least professedly) a Trinitarian. His system of Christian faith would incline him to consider uniformity of plan as proving only unity of design, maintained by three designers. He therefore carries the argument no further than to the proof of *unity of counsel.* To me his Chapter upon this Attribute has always appeared very defective. If we consult any authors upon Natural Religion, who held Unitarian sentiments, such as Lactantius among the ancients, or Abernethy among the moderns, we find the argument for the Unity of God better elucidated, and rendered satisfactory and conclusive.*

Of the argument, as I have stated it at the commencement of the Second Part, every reader will judge for himself. It will probably impress different minds with different degrees of force. The conclusion, there drawn, is in my opinion irresistible, if we only keep in view the principle, adopted in all resonings from effect to cause, that no more causes ought to be supposed than are necessary to account for the effects. One omnipotent and infinite Designer is competent to produce every effect, which is discernible throughout the universe: there is no occasion for more; it is unreasonable to believe in more. The evidence of Nature therefore decidedly opposes the doctrine of three infinite Minds, three all-powerful and all-perfect contrivers.

* See note at the end of the volume.

II. In the second place, Mr. Wardlaw, (p. 11.) argues a plurality of Persons in the Godhead from the plural termination of ALEIM, ADONIM, and other Hebrew names for God.

He observes, that Deut. vi. 4. according to the proper import of the words in the original, denotes such a plurality; and he presents the passage to his readers in the following translation; "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, OUR GODS, is one Jehovah." If this translation had been proposed by a Unitarian, I have no doubt it would have been said, that he did it with a direct intention *to burlesque the Scriptures.* I believe, that Mr. Wardlaw had not this design; but his version certainly produces this effect. To my mind nothing can sound more offensive. I do not however reject this argument from the force of mere *feelings*, however justifiable, but from the following considerations.

1. First; if the plural termination of ALEIM, &c. indicates plurality at all, it denotes, not only a plurality of persons or subsistences, but a plurality *of Gods;* for, on this supposition, Mr. Wardlaw's translation is undoubtedly correct, "Jehovah, our *Gods.*" But this, I presume is more than even Trinitarians will be inclined to admit.

2. I observe, secondly, that the true explanation of the use of the plural number in this case is known to every tyro in Hebrew literature. The whole mystery may be resolved by a short quotation from that useful book, the Hebrew Grammar;

"Words, that express dominion, dignity, majesty, are commonly put in the plural."

WILSON'S HEBREW GRAMMAR, p. 270.

Thus it is evident to mere English readers, that the plural termination of the Hebrew names for God, far from being an *anomaly*, as Mr. Wardlaw calls it, is agreeable to a common rule of syntax. I shall illustrate this rule by a few exam-

ples. Gen. xxiv. 9, 10. On account of the great dignity and authority of the patriarch Abraham, the word ADONIM, translated *Master*, is put in the plural number. The literal translation of the passage is therefore as follows: "And the servant put his hand under the thigh *of Abraham his masters*, and sware to him concerning that matter; and the servant took ten camels of the camels *of his masters*, and departed; for all the goods *of his masters* were in his hand." Also, in ver. 51, the expression, which is rendered according to our idiom, "the wife of the son of thy *master*," is literally, "the wife of the son of thy *masters*." Agreeably to the same rule, Potiphar is called the *Masters*, or *Lords*, of Joseph; (Gen. xxxix. 2, 3, 7, 8, 16, 19, 20. xl. 7.) Pharoah is styled the *Lords* of his butler and baker; (Gen. xl. 1; and Joseph as governour of Egypt, is denominated ADONIM, a *Lords;* (Gen. xlii. 30, 33. xliv. 8.) What then becomes of Mr. Wardlaw's argument from the Hebraism, "If I be *masters*, where is my fear?" (Mal. i. 6.) According to his method of reasoning, the Scriptures teach, that there was a plurality of persons in Abraham, in Potiphar, in Pharaoh, and in Joseph; and, if I did not confine myself to the book of Genesis, I might bring numerous other instances to illustrate the application of his rule.

3. As a further proof of the futility of this argument, I observe, thirdly, that the plural termination is employed in speaking, not only of the true God, but also of false Deities. We have an instance of this in the account of the Golden calf, constructed by the Israelites. Ex. xxxii. 3, 4. "And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings, which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron; and he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graven tool, after he had made it a molten calf; and they said, '*These be thy Gods*, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Ver. 7, 8. "And the Lord said unto Moses,

"Go, get thee down: for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way, which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, '*These be thy Gods*, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' Ver. 31. "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, 'Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them *gods of Gold*." In these instances, the original would have been more properly translated, "*Let this be thy god*, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," and, "This people have made them *a god* of gold." It is evident, even to the English reader, that the plural number is employed, although it is certain, that neither the Israelites, nor the writer of the narrative, had any idea of a plurality of persons in the idol.

In like manner, the plural number is commonly employed in speaking of other false Divinities. Judges viii. 33. "And it came to pass as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith *their god*;" literally translated, it is, "their gods." Judges xvi. 23, 24. "Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon, *their god*, and to rejoice; for they said, '*Our god* hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand:' and, when the people saw him, they praised *their god*; for they said, '*Our god* hath delivered into our hands our enemy.'" In all these instances, the word ALEIM, "*god*," although applied to Dagon, a single idol, is in the plural number. 1 Kings xi. 33. "Because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth, *the goddess* of the Sidonians, Chemosh, *the god* of the Moabites, and Milcom, *the god* of the children of Ammon." In these several cases the plural word ALEIM is

used in the original, although each of the idol deities, Ashtoreth, Chemosh, and Milcom, was a single person, the ghost of a dead man or woman. Other examples may be found, Num. xxv. 1—3. Deut. iv. 7. 1 Sam. iv. 5—8. 1 Kings xi. 5. 2 Kings i. 2. xix. 37.

4. Fourthly, it may be remarked in reply to the argument from the plural termination of the name of God, that it has been rejected by many of the most learned Trinitarians. Among others Calvin himself denies, that the plural termination is any evidence of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. That celebrated man had too much learning and too much sense, to build his system upon such a sandy foundation.*

* [" The plural term *gods*, Elohim, is used of *one* of the persons alone. *Thy throne*, O Gods, *is for ever and ever.* And, *O Gods, thy Gods have anointed thee.* These texts the apostle applies to *Christ.* Now unless Christ, the *Son*, have another Trinity in him, the plural word cannot intend three persons, but one ; only it is more majestick." Emlyn, vol. 2d p. 38. " It is very apparent, that it was not the intent of these plural expressions, to teach us a *plurality of persons in the Godhead*, because they are *only* used (and but *rarely* neither) in the *Old Testament*, where it is confessed the doctrine of the Trinity was not explicitly revealed ; but they are never *once* used in the *New Testament*, of which it is pretended, that this doctrine is the fundamental article. To us *Christians* God *never* speaks so, and sure he would have done it as fully as to the *Jews*, if he intended *we* should believe this doctrine more explicitly and fully than they. In the gospel we should find God using this language about himself, *we* and *us*, and *Gods*, if ever that had been designed to express a Trinity ; for no style had been more natural than this current of speech, supposing God to be three persons. It is evident that this was but an *idiom* of language, and has no argument in it, since the *New Testament shuns all such style*, where yet it had been most proper for that purpose. The Christian revelation always speaks God to be one singular person ; whereas *three persons in one God* had been so strange a matter, that the most particular care and accuracy of expression had been necessary to be used, if that had been to be revealed to our faith." Emlyn, vol. 1. It is remarkable

III. In the third place, Mr. Wardlaw argues for a plurality of persons in the Godhead, from the construction of the Hebrew names for God with *verbs* sometimes in the singular number, and sometimes in the *plural*. He calls this construction an *anomaly*, or *irregularity*. (p. 12.) But those, who have learned Hebrew, know, that. when a *plural* noun is used to denote a *single* object, (which is the case in various instances, the verb is sometimes put in the plural *out of regard merely to the plural termination of the noun*. See Patrick and Le Clerc on Gen. xx. 13. This rule affords the true explanation of the few passages, in which ALEIM, the Hebrew word for *God*, is followed by *a plural verb ;* and, by consulting Ex. xxxii. 4. 8. ("Let this be thy god, O Israel, *who brought* thee out of the land of Egypt,") the critical student will find, that a plural verb is employed, even when ALEIM is applied, not to Jehovah, the only True God, but to an idol.

IV. Another proof of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, much insisted on by Mr. Wardlaw, is the occasional use of the plural pronouns, US and OUR, when God is represented speaking of himself.

In stating the Scriptural evidence for the Unity of God, I observed, (Part II. ch. ii.) that that doctrine is implied in every passage, in which the personal pronouns of the singular number are used to denote the Supreme Deity. In

that the passage which Mr. Wardlaw thus translates from the Old Testament "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, OUR GODS, is one Jehovah," has been quoted by Jesus, and is thus translated by the evangelist Mark into Greek. Mark xii. 29, "The Lord, OUR GOD, is one Lord." The plural form *disappears entirely in the New Testament*, although we are told that the doctrine of the Trinity, which this form is intended to support, is the *cardinal* doctrine of the New Testament. Is n. t this enough to settle the question ? Is not St. Mark, when he reports the words of Jesus, as sure a guide to the import of the Old Testament, as Mr. Wardlaw ?—EDITOR.]

opposition however to the thousands and tens of thousands of passages, which imply by the use of *singular* pronouns, that God is one person, the Trinitarians have collected together as many as *three*, which by the use of *plural* pronouns are supposed to indicate a plurality of persons in the Godhead. These passages I shall now produce. Gen. i. 26. "And God said, 'Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness.'" Gen. xi. 7. "And Jehovah said, 'Go to, let *us* go down, and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'" Isa. vi. 8. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for *us?*'" From among these three passages Mr. Wardlaw has selected the two former *as examples*.

The remarks, which I would submit in reply, are these.

1. First, I would observe, that by bringing forward these passages Mr. Wardlaw acknowledges the validity of the opposite argument of the Unitarians, which is established upon similar grounds. He acknowledges, that the number of persons in the Godhead is indicated by the personal pronouns, employed in speaking of the Godhead. His argument proceeds on the supposition, that the use of a *plural* pronoun in speaking of God intimates, that there is in God a plurality of persons: of course he will admit, that the use of a *singular* pronoun in speaking of God denotes, that God is one person only. As a Unitarian, there is nothing, which I more desire than the concession, that the number of persons in the Godhead may be inferred from the use of the personal pronouns in the Sacred Scriptures; and this is granted to me in the argument, which I am now considering.

2. Secondly, I remark, that the true explanation of these three passages is easily to be found, by considering, that in all the languages, with which we are acquainted, persons

of great power and dignity sometimes speak of themselves in the plural number. It is usual for the princes and great men of the earth to express their desires and intentions by saying, "It is *our* pleasure," "Given at *our* palace," "Let *us* go to such a place," "*We* command this or that."

The Scriptures present various examples of this universal custom. Thus, (1 Kings xii. 6.) when Rehoboam asks the opinion of the *old* men concerning the reply to be made to an important request of the Israelitish nation, he says to them, "How do ye advise, that I may answer this people?" But, when he consults the *young* men, (ver. 9.) he assumes a higher tone, and says, "What counsel give ye, that *we* may answer this people?" See also the parallel place; 2 Chron. x. 6—9.

The letter of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, in reply to the recommendation that he would put a stop to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, commences in these terms; (Ezra iv. 18.) "The letter, which ye sent unto *us*, hath been plainly read before *me*."

Nor is this language used only by *kings*. Our Saviour (John iii. 11, 12.) says to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily; I say unto you, *We* speak that *we* do know, and testify that *we* have seen, and ye receive not *our* witness: if *I* have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if *I* tell you heavenly things?" Here Jesus Christ not only calls himself *I*, but likewise *we*. Is it to be inferred from the latter circumstance, that several persons were united in him?

The Apostle Paul, when he speaks of his own feelings and condition, uses the plural pronouns, *We*, *Us*, *Our*, almost as frequently as the singular pronouns, *I*, *Me*, *Mine*. But no one, reading his epistles, imagines, that he intended to represent himself as a plurality of persons.

If therefore we consider how common throughout the world has been the use of plural pronouns to express the dignity and authority of the speaker, and that in the Scriptures this phraseology is employed by a Prophet, an Apostle, or a Prince, we cannot be surprised, that in three instances the King of Kings should employ the same majestick language. The wonder is, that the examples are so rare. Perhaps this form of expression was in general studiously avoided, in order to preserve the great doctrine of the Unity of God as one person, from the possibility of misapprehension.*

Against the explanation, which I have now given, and which is supported by names of the highest authority among not only Unitarian, but also Jewish and Trinitarian criticks, Mr. Wardlaw urges three objections. (p. 12, 13.)

"In the first place," says he, "it is not consistent with fact, that the Supreme Being is ever represented in the Scriptures as using this particular style;" by which assertion he only takes for granted the thing to be proved. Secondly, he raises us to the tip-toe of expectation by saying, "Neither was it, in point of fact, the style of the kings of the earth themselves in the time of Moses." It appears, that Mr. Wardlaw has access to documents, written in the time of Moses, of whose existence the learned world was never yet informed. But, until he shall satisfy the ardour of literary curiosity by the publication of these invaluable records, we must judge from the evidence, which now lies before us, and presume, that the kings of the earth occasionally used in that age the same style, which we know

* It is well known, that Mohammed did not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, and that his followers in Asia are as strict in asserting the proper Unity of God, as the Unitarians in Europe. Yet nothing is more common in the Koran, than for God to speak of himself in the plural number, *We did, We gave, We commanded.* These could only be intended as *majestick* expressions.

them to have used in all ages, with which we are more familiarly acquainted. Mr. Wardlaw adds, that no instance can be produced from the whole Bible, in which a king speaks of himself in the plural number. Whether, in the instances above quoted, Rehoboam and Artaxerxes do not speak of themselves in the plural as well as the singular number, the reader must judge. In the 3d place, Mr. Wardlaw asks triumphantly. "When do we ever find an earthly monarch *consulting with himself?—addressing proposals to himself?*" Let him look, in the original Hebrew, at Gen. xviii. 21. He will find, that the same Being, who in one of the passages under consideration says, "Let *us* go down," expresses the same purpose by saying, "Let *me* go down." Or, if our friend objects, that the phrase in the common translation is, "*I will* go down," I reply, that the two passages, which he has produced, may with equal propriety be translated, "*We will* go down," and "*We will* make man." In all these instances, the *future tense* is used in the original, and the reader is left to translate them indicatively, or imperatively, at his own option. For my part, I perceive no impropriety in the representation of a monarch, consulting with himself, or addressing proposals to himself. I have no objection therefore to the translations, "Let us make man," "Let us go down," or "Let *me* go down." If Mr. Wardlaw thinks differently, let him be consistent, and translate *literally, in the future tense*, in *all* these instances; but let him not mislead his admirers, and waste the time of his opponents, by such egregious trifling.

In the three passages therefore, in which Jehovah speaks of himself in the plural number, he is considered, not without solid and irrefragable reasons, "as using the language of Majesty according to the practice of earthly potentates." It is agreeable to the established usages of speech, for a single person to employ the plural pronouns, *We*, *Us*, *Our*,

in order to denote his dignity and authority; whereas there is no rule, according to which several persons can speak of themselves by the use of the singular pronouns, *I, Me, My.* Let the considerate and serious inquirer therefore make his choice; whether he will yield to the authority of thousands and tens of thousands of passages, which teach that God is only one person, and understand the three exceptions to the general language of the Scriptures, as phrases employed to denote the Majesty of the speaker; or whether he will, on the other hand, adhere to the literal meaning of these three passages, and consequently set at defiance those thousands and tens of thousands of other passages, which cannot by any rules of grammar or canons of criticism be reconciled to the orthodox doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Godhead.

IV. In the fourth place, Mr. Wardlaw insists, that a plurality of persons is indicated by the expression, which occurs Gen. iii. 22. "And the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man is become *as one of us, to know good and evil.*' "

The expression, "*one of us,*" evidently alludes to more persons, or intelligent beings, than one. But to prove, that they were *persons in the Godhead,* is impossible. The only attribute, which they are affirmed to possess, is the knowledge of good and evil. If therefore it be conceded, that there are any intelligent beings, inferiour to the Supreme Deity, who resemble man in the capacity of distinguishing between good and evil, to them we may reasonably suppose, that the allusion was made. That there are such beings is evident, among other passages, from the fifth verse of this chapter, which accords remarkably with that under review, and directly points to its true interpretation; "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be *as gods,* (or angels,) *knowing good and evil.*" The assertion therefore, "the man is become as one of us,"

signifies, not that the man was become like one of the persons in the Godhead, but that he was become like one of the persons *in the heavenly host*, resembling them in the knowledge of good and evil.

I conclude this Chapter with warning the reader, not to assent without examination to Mr. Wardlaw's assertion, (p. 15.) that he has quoted his passages, "*as a specimen, merely to show what he means.*" I believe he could have produced scarcely any more passages to the same purpose. Indeed every attentive inquirer must remark, how all the authors, who explore this field of argument, are found to pick up almost precisely the same specimens.

CHAPTER III.

EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR A TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD.

THE arguments, considered in the last Chapter, are intended to prove nothing more than a *plurality* of persons in the Godhead. Other arguments are brought to show, that the persons in the Godhead are *three*, or in other words, that they form a *Trinity*.

If the doctrine of the Trinity be, as its advocates represent, one of the most prominent articles of the Christian faith, and if the belief of it be absolutely necessary to salvation, we may expect to find it insisted on by the Sacred writers with remarkable earnestness and frequency, and stated by them in the most decisive and unequivocal language. Especially, if the subject be one, upon which our ideas are necessarily indistinct, we may hope that their manner of declaring it will be so explicit, as to leave little room for the erroneous conceptions, to which from its extreme obscurity we are peculiarly liable. In order that we may judge, whether the Scriptural evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity is such as the exigencies of this case seem to demand, it will be advisable to collect together into one view all the passages, which are commonly supposed to contain it. Let the candid reader therefore peruse the following list, and seriously ask himself, whether the passages, here brought together, would at once strike the mind of an unprejudiced inquirer with a conviction, that the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead is laid down in the Holy Scriptures.

A LIST OF ALL THE PASSAGES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH ASSERT, IN TERMS MORE OR LESS DIRECT AND EXPRESS, THAT "IN THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD THERE ARE THREE DISTINCT SUBSISTENCES OR PERSONS, THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT."

1. Num. vi. 23—26. "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee; The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

2. Isa. vi. 3, and Rev. iv. 8. "And one cried unto another, and said, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts.'"

3. Isa. xxxiv. 16. "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them."

4. Isa. xlviii. 16. "And now the Lord God, and his spirit, hath sent me."

5. Mat. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

6. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

7. Rev. i. 4, 5. "Grace be unto you and peace, from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven spirits, which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."

"It is reasonable to expect," says Mr. Wardlaw at the beginning of his eighth Discourse, "that those doctrines, which form the leading articles of any system, *should be plainly stated in the book*, which professes to make that system known." In his Preface also, he lays down the same indisputable maxim, that, concerning the object of worship and other subjects of equal importance, the language of Revelation must be *explicit*, *clear*, *precise*, and *determinate*. Where then, I ask, is *the doctrine of the Trinity* stated in terms explicit, clear, precise, and determinate? Where is the passage, which, if presented to any person, not previously trained up and instructed in the doctrine, would suggest to his mind the notion of three distinct intelligent agents, equal and infinite in every Divine perfection? I cannot conceive how any man of modesty can maintain, that the passages, just cited, answer to this description. Mr. Wardlaw himself, whatever he may profess in words, admits in fact, that the doctrine is only *alluded to* in these passages, or may be *inferred* from them. For, instead of leaving them to speak for themselves and make their own impression upon the minds of readers, having certainly in general a sufficient bias towards his interpretation of them, he has devoted several pages to the illustration of that single text, which he affirms to be clear and decisive above all the rest. (See p. 16—18. 266—269.)

With respect to the first two first passages in the list, (the benediction pronounced by the Hebrew priests, and the solemn praise uttered by the Seraphim,) Mr. Wardlaw (p. 293.) only produces them as containing "*a tacit reference* to the trinity of persons in the Godhead." But how was it possible, that this tacit reference could be perceived, before the doctrine was clearly declared? Can we imagine a more preposterous inversion of ideas and evidences, than

that, which is attributed to the Author of Revelation, by supposing the *references* to a doctrine to come first in order, and the explicit statements of it afterwards? However Trinitarians may surmount this difficulty, they must remember, that *an allusion* to a doctrine is not *a proof* of it. If the doctrine of the Trinity were previously established, we might perhaps not irrationally presume, that the three persons of the Godhead were referred to in the threefold praise and benediction: but we cannot make such an application, until we know, that there are three persons in the Godhead. The passages in question may be easily explained upon another principle. In all languages, and especially in such *simple* languages as the Hebrew, it is usual to repeat a word or an idea, merely for the purpose of impressing it more strongly upon the mind. Agreeably to this general practice, it is a rule of Hebrew syntax, that *the superlative degree is denoted by the repetition of the adjective.* The The same sentiment, which is expressed by the words, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts," might be signified by saying, "*Thrice holy* is the LORD of hosts;" or that "Jehovah of hosts is exceedingly pure and holy above all beings." Other examples of a threefold repetition, employed to give *intensity* to the signification, are presented in the following passages; Jer. xxii. 29. "*O earth, earth, earth*, hear the word of the LORD." Ex. xxi. 27. "I will *overturn, overturn, overturn* it." Rev. viii. 13. "*Wo, wo, wo*, to the inhabitants of the earth."

The two next passages upon the list are produced by Mr. Wardlaw, not as mere allusions, but as "*proofs*" of the doctrine of the Trinity. (p. 15.) Nevertheless he adds no remarks to show *how* they prove his doctrine, nor can any expressions in my humble judgment be more irrevelant. What Mr. Wardlaw's arguments from these passages would be, I cannot conjecture, and therefore cannot answer them.

I shall only remark concerning the former of these passages, (Isa. xxxiv. 16.) that the pronoun MY, which he has printed in small capitals, and upon which therefore I presume his argument depends, as it appears to me, has nothing corresponding to it in the original Hebrew; and concerning the latter, (Isa. xlviii. 16.) that the expression, "God hath sent me," cannot, without an almost profane violation of common sense, be considered as the speech of God himself, but proves, that in this verse, as well as in the beginning of the next, the Prophet Isaiah speaks in his own person.

We come then to the passage, upon which Mr. Wardlaw lays the greatest stress as a clear and decisive proof of the Trinitarian doctrine. (p. 16—18. 266—269.) Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;" or, literally and properly, "*into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He argues, that this passage proves the Son and the Holy Spirit to be intelligent agents, equal with the Father, because they are here *associated* with him, and because they are represented as equally with him *the objects of supreme worship.*

To the following remarks, intended to show the true meaning of the passage, I crave the attention of the reader.

Every one, who has accurately observed the phraseology of the Scriptures, knows, that "*the name*" of a person is an expression often used to signify *the person himself.* As an example I refer to the beginning of the 20th Psalm; "The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; *the name* of the God of Jacob defend thee." It is evident, that the expression, "the LORD," in the first clause, corresponds to "the name of the God of Jacob" in the second clause, and that "*the name* of the God of Jacob" signifies *the God of Jacob himself.* The word *Name*, in such cases, ap-

pears to be used only as a title of respect, as we say in English "the king's *majesty*," meaning *the king himself*. This shows, that no particular stress ought to be laid upon the use of the word "*name*" in the passage under consideration. The meaning of the verse is the same as if it had been said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them *into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*." We find accordingly, that the word "*name*" is sometimes employed, and sometimes omitted, in this connexion, without materially altering the sense. In the book of Acts, we read of persons being "baptized *into the name of the Lord Jesus*: (Acts. viii. 16. xix. 5.) but in the Epistles of Paul they are simply stated to be "baptized *into Christ*." (See Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27.)*

It is clear therefore, that to be "baptized into a person or thing," and to be "baptized into *the name* of that person or thing," are expressions of the same import. The only question relates to the signification of these two phrases. Does the expression, "to be baptized into a person or thing, or into the name of a person or thing," signify, that that person or thing is made *an object of worship*, or only that it is made *a subject of faith?* The former interpretation is advanced to Mr. Wardlaw, and rests upon his unsupported assertion: the latter is adopted by the Unitarians, and is established by the following proofs.

In 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. St. Paul uses these words; "Moreover, brethren, I would not, that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, *and were all baptized into Moses* in a cloud and in the sea." What is meant by Paul's assertion,

* Those, who wish for further illustrations, may consult Schleusner's Lexicon, v. Βαπτιζω and Ονομα. This immensely learned critick, though a Trinitarian, adopts the interpretation of Mat. xxviii. 19, which I have defended.

that the Israelites were all baptized into Moses? Does it signify, that they avowed Moses to be the object of their worship, or that they contemplated him as a subject of their faith? Undoubtedly the latter interpretation is preferable. The Apostle means, that, when they passed through the cloud and the sea, *they made a profession of their belief* in Moses.

Again, the Apostle Paul in the same Epistle, the 1st chapter, the 12th and following verses, expresses his apprehensions lest any of them should say, that he had baptized persons *into his own name.* "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? *or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?* I thank God, that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest they should say, *that I had baptized in mine own name.*" The Apostle did not surely mean to indicate his aversion to their professing by baptism, that they regarded him as the object of their worship. When he asks, "Were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" he does not mean to decline divine honours; he intends to remind them only, that by their baptism they professed *faith in Christ*, and not *faith in Paul*, and that they ought therefore to submit to the authority of *Christ* alone, and not to the authority of *Paul.*

I shall only refer to another passage in illustration of this subject. Rom. vi. 3. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" This verse appears to me to decide the question proposed, *viz.* Whether the phrase, "being baptized into a person or thing," signifies, that that person or thing is made by baptism *an object of worship*, or *a subject of faith?* According to the former interpretation, the Apostle means, "Know ye not, that so many of us as professed by baptism, that Jesus Christ is the object of our worship,

professed by baptism, that *his death* is the object of our worship?" If this absurd sense be inevitable according to the one method, let us try how the other interpretation suits: "Know ye not, that so many of us as professed by baptism, that Jesus Christ is the subject of our faith, professed by baptism, that *his death* is the subject of our faith?" This explanation is clear and rational. It ought consequently to be preferred to the other, which is nonsensical.

It appears therefore, that to be baptized into a person or thing, or into the name of a person or thing, was *to avow faith* in that person or thing, and not to make it the object of worship. We are thus enabled to determine the true sense of the appointed formula, which is, "Go, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them as a testimony *of their belief* in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

The passage is explained in this manner, not only by all Unitarian expositors, but by the learned and upright Dr. Whitby *in his Paraphrase;* "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name (*or, into the belief*) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" and the amiable Archbishop Tillotson, in his Sermon upon this text, (V. ii. fol. p. 512, 513.) though he considers the words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as denoting the three persons of the Trinity, nevertheless represents the rite of baptism "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," merely as *a profession of faith in the Christian religion, the principal doctrines of which relate to these three subjects.*

That the appointed form of baptism was intended to express faith in these as the three chief points of Christianity, is further apparent from the various *Confessions of faith*, employed in the primitive Church, among which the best

known is that, commonly called "the Apostles' Creed." The articles of belief, contained in these simple formularies, were always arranged under the three heads of what relates to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, the sense, in which our Lord's direction was understood by his earliest disciples, is still more clearly manifested by the original method of administering the rite of baptism. This is sufficiently explained by the following quotation from the baptismal service of the Church of England, which here agrees upon the whole with the practice of the primitive ages.

"*Then shall the priest demand of each of the persons to be baptized, severally, these Questions following.*

Q. Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?

A. I renounce them all.

Q. Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth?

And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord? And that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that he went down into hell, and also did rise again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from thence shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead?

And dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholick Church; the Communion of Saints; the Remission of sins; the Resurrection of the flesh; and everlasting life after death?

A. All this I steadfastly believe.

Q. Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?

A. That is my desire.

Q. Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

A. I will endeavour so to do, God being my helper."*

Thus, by means of questions proposed by the Bishop, and answers returned by the Catechumen, the latter, before being immersed in water, avowed his faith in the doctrines of the Christian Religion, first, concerning the Father, secondly, concerning the Son, and thirdly, concerning the holy spirit, at the same time professing his resolution to live by the grace of God agreeably to these convictions. This is all, that was intended or understood, by being baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit."

If therefore Mr. Wardlaw would have taken the trouble to inquire into the application of this phraseology in other parts of Scripture, and into the sense attributed to our Lord's words by all the primitive Christians, he might have spared his ridicule (p. 278, 279.) of Dr. Lardner's most excellent paraphrase of this passage,† and his complaints against a form, as he says, "so strange and enigmatical."

Having now shown the true sense of our Saviour's words, I ask, What trace do they contain of the doctrine of three

* See "The Administration of baptism to such as are of riper years." Also Cave's Primitive Christianity, ch. x. p. 200. and Westein's Note on Mat. xxviii. 19.

† "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. That is, 'Go ye therefore into all the world, and teach, or disciple all nations, baptizing them into the profession of faith in, and an obligation to obey the doctrine taught by Christ, with authority from God the Father, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost.'" Lardner's Works, Vol. xi. p. 147.

persons in one God? We, Unitarians, believe in the Father, who is the only true God, and who gave a revelation of his will to his creatures: we believe in the Son, the messenger of the Father's grace, the bearer of these glorious tidings: we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Divine power or influence, by which Jesus Christ and the Apostles were enabled to work miracles, to confirm the truth of the doctrines which they taught.

The sixth passage upon the list is the devout and benevolent wish of Paul at the conclusion of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy spirit, be with you all." Upon this passage Mr. Wardlaw lays great stress: p. 17, 18, 120, 141, 290, 291, 292, 330.

But what is the plain and obvious meaning of the Apostle's words? "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." With this benediction St. Paul concludes many of his epistles. What does it signify? Evidently, "May you enjoy the favour of the Lord Jesus Christ, by being the objects of his protection and blessing."—"The love of God be with you all." This implies, "May you, by a patient perseverance in well-doing, continue to be the objects of the peculiar approbation and love of God."—"The communion of the holy spirit be with you all." Is not the meaning of this phrase equally apparent? "May you all partake of the holy spirit;" that is, "May you all share the gifts and manifest the dispositions, which arise from the extraordinary influence of God upon the Members of the Christian Church." What vestige have we here of the doctrine of three persons in one God? Paul only expresses in one sentence three devout wishes for his fellow Christians, one relating to the favour of Christ, the

other the love of God, and the third to their participation in spiritual gifts and blessings.

Mr. Wardlaw endeavours to press this most plain, beautiful, and interesting benediction into the service of the Trinitarian system by remarking, that "it includes in it a prayer." Doubtless, in the mind of the habitually pious man, almost every wish is accompanied with a silent petition. But to whom is this petition addressed? By all, who entertain just views of Scripture truth, it is addressed to the one true God, our Heavenly Father, who is able to do for us above all that we can ask or think. We may therefore reasonably consider the words of the Apostle as implying not only a benevolent wish, but also a devout prayer to the Father of mercies; that the disciples at Corinth might enjoy the favourable regards of the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the Church; that they might continue to be approved and beloved by God; and that they might possess, in common with the whole body of Christians, a portion of the holy spirit.

Mr. Wardlaw insists, (p. 17.) that, because Jesus Christ, God, and the holy spirit, are mentioned in three wishes, or prayers, which are "precisely the same in form," therefore they are equally the *objects* of prayer. As I am expected to bring a passage of Scripture to refute every criticism of my opponent, however groundless and unreasonable, I refer to the conclusion of the *First* Epistle to the Corinthians; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you; *my love* be with you all in Christ Jesus." Here we find coupled together in the same manner, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," and "the love *of Paul*." If therefore the conclusion of the *Second* Epistle, in which Jesus Christ, God, and the holy spirit, are mentioned in conjunction, proves the Divinity of Jesus Christ and of the holy spirit, the conclusion of the *First* Epistle, in which Paul is in like

manner associated with Jesus Christ, proves the Divinity of Paul.

Instead of giving any support, even in the way of remote allusion or inference, to the doctrine of the Trinity, this passage bears directly against it. Three distinct beings are mentioned in the benediction. One of them is called "God." Since therefore we know, that "there is none other God but one," it necessarily follows, that the two other beings are not God. If all be equally God, why is the title applied to one of them only?

"The communion of the holy spirit be with you all" implies, that "the holy spirit" does not in this instance signify God, or any *person*. What can possibly be intended by the *communion of God?* Is God divided? Can we *partake* of God, or of any *person?* No; but we may partake of *powers*, *energies*, and *influences*, we may enjoy a communion *of spiritual gifts*. As in Phil. iii. 10. "the communion of the sufferings of Christ" means *a participation in his sufferings*, so here, and in Phil. ii. 1. "the communion of the spirit" signifies *a participation in spiritual gifts and influences*. We may enjoy a communion OF *gifts* WITH *persons;* but *a participation of a person* is an idea, which cannot enter the mind. So far as my knowledge of Greek, and a careful examination of all the passages, in which the word (κοινωνια) occurs, enable me to judge, I am perfectly satisfied, that this expression of St. Paul cannot be interpreted in any other way than that, which I have stated.

The only remaining passage, which is supposed to inculcate the doctrine of three Persons in one God, is the benediction at the beginning of the Revelation of John. Rev. i. 4, 5. "Grace be unto you and peace, from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven spirits, who are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."

"The seven spirits of God," says Mr. Wardlaw, (p. 290.) "is evidently an emblematical expression for *the Holy Spirit.*" But many of the most eminent *Trinitarian* critics have expressed a contrary opinion. The description, "He who is, and who was, and who is to come," points to the one True God, the Father; the seven spirits are said to be "before His throne," which denotes their inferiority to Him, and altogether excludes Mr. Wardlaw's interpretation. Besides, we might ask with far greater propriety than in any of those cases, in which Mr. Wardlaw has raised the objection against Unitarian criticisms, If St. John meant to express a wish of favour from *the Holy Spirit*, why did he not say so? "Why must we so often impute to the New Testament writers language so unnatural and affected ;—and especially in cases, where the simpler expressions would not only be equally correct in themselves, but free at the same time of any tendency to mislead." p. 286. Lastly, allowing it to be as "evident" as Mr. Wardlaw asserts, that the Holy Spirit is meant by the seven spirits before the throne of God, a wish of favour from the Holy Spirit and from Jesus Christ would only denote, that they have the power of bestowing that favour, a power, as we learn from other parts of Scripture, conferred upon them by God the Father.

Before closing the consideration of this branch of evidence, it is necessary for me to take notice of the manner, in which Mr. Wardlaw has introduced his remarks upon the passages of the New Testament, which he supposes to make mention of the three persons in the Godhead. Declining to enter largely into the proofs, which might be derived from the *Jewish* Scriptures, he determines (p. 15) to "go forward to those of the New Testament, *proceeding, at the same time, with regard to them also, on the same principle; selecting only one or two of the most prominent passages;*"

and he afterwards says, " *I shall confine myself at present to a few remarks on two passages only.*" (*viz.* Mat. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.) From this language persons, not previously acquainted with the subject, would conclude, that these two passages are only *strong and clear examples* of the proofs, which might be produced at great length and in great numbers. It is my duty to inform the reader, that these two are almost, if not altogether, the only passages, upon which Trinitarians have in general laid any stress as containing the doctrine of three Persons in one God.*

* See dissertation at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES.

In his first discourse, Mr. Wardlaw discusses those passages, in which "all the three persons of the Godhead are introduced together," (p. 29.) and which he considers as "proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity in general." (p. 18.) He proceeds, in the next place, to "prove distinctly the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit;" and he observes, that "the evidence in support of the general doctrine is not properly closed, till all this mass of separate proof has been adduced and illustrated." I agree with him, that all the passages, which contain evidences of the Divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, bear upon the subject. For, if Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit be two intelligent beings, each distinct from God the Father, and if each of them be proved to be infinite in all perfections, it will necessarily follow, that there exist three infinite and all-perfect minds, or, in other words, three Persons in the Godhead. It would however be impossible to reconcile this fact, supposing it proved, with a belief in one God only; nor ought we to be satisfied with any attempts to establish a doctrine so obscure and so important as that of the Trinity, merely by showing, that the Scriptures assert in *separate* places, the Divinity of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as well as the Divinity of the Father.

Before we begin to examine the evidence for the orthodox opinion concerning the nature of Christ, it is necessary to know what that opinion is. Nothing could indicate greater irreverence for a question of such vast importance, than to argue and dispute without even understanding what

we wish to prove. It is therefore a matter of no small satisfaction, that Mr. Wardlaw's statements are clear and intelligible. He lays down his doctrine in the following terms: (p. 31.) "that Jesus Christ is truly God; that in his person there subsisted, when he was on earth, and still subsists a union of the Divine and Human Natures." It appears also from the general train of language and argument, pursued through his volume, that, while he believes the *man* Christ Jesus to have been finite, created, mortal, dependent, exposed to suffering, and limited in power and knowledge, he also believes, that this same person, being *God* as well as man, was infinite, uncreated, immortal, independent, incapable of suffering, omnipotent, and omniscient.

All Trinitarians believe, that Jesus Christ was but *one person*, although possessing *two natures*. Their doctrine is, that one of the three infinite minds in the Godhead was so united to a human soul, as to form one intelligent being, retaining the properties both of the God and of the Man.

By the *Nature* of any thing we always mean its *Qualities*. When therefore it is said, that Jesus Christ possesses both a Divine and a Human Nature, it must be meant, that he possesses both the qualities of God and the qualities of Man. But, if we consider what these qualities are, we perceive them to be totally incompatible with one another. The qualities of *God* are *eternity, independence, immutability, entire and perpetual exemption from pain and death, omniscience, and omnipotence.* The qualities of *Man* are, *derived existence, dependence, liability to change, to suffering, and to dissolution, comparative weakness and ignorance.* To maintain therefore, that the same mind is endued both with a Divine and a Human nature, is to maintain, that *the same mind* is both *created* and *uncreated*, both *finite* and *infinite*, both *dependent* and *independent*, both *changeable* and *unchangeable*, both *mortal* and *immortal*, both *susceptible of pain* and *incapable of it*,

both *able to do all things* and *not able*, both *acquainted with all things* and *not acquainted with them*, both *ignorant* of certain subjects and *possessed of the most intimate knowledge* of them. If it be not certain, that such a doctrine as this is false, there is no certainty upon any subject. It is vain to call it a *mystery;* it is an *absurdity*, it is an *impossibility*. According to *my* ideas of propriety and duty, by assenting to it, I should culpably abuse those faculties of understanding, which have been given me to be employed in distinguishing between right and wrong, truth and errour. According to the maxims, laid down as the guides of our inquiry, and acknowledged by Mr. Wardlaw as fundamental principles, (see P. I. ch. 4.) this doctrine could not be established even by the clearest declarations of the Scriptures. For the testimony of the Scriptures would not prove it to be true; on the contrary, its occurrence in the Scriptures would prove them to be false.

Upon this subject Mr. Wardlaw expresses himself in distinct language, and appears to have clear, though inconsistent, ideas. We will however suppose, that, when he calls the opinion of the Divine and Human Natures of Jesus Christ *a mystery*, he means, that we cannot make it "the subject of fixed thought, or of distinct conception." (p. 32.) The doctrine then becomes like sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal; and we cannot conceive how any benefit can arise from listening to sound without sense, and assenting to words without ideas. Nevertheless, if we find in the Scriptures the unintelligible proposition, that "in the person of Christ Jesus, a Divine is united with a Human nature," or if this assertion be uttered in these terms, and declared to express a truth, by an accredited Prophet, we shall give our implicit assent, presuming that it is understood by the Prophet who pronounces, the Apostle who writes, or the God who dictates it.

Such would be the proper mode of treating this doctrine, considered as unintelligible. But Mr. Wardlaw has not provided for it even this refuge. His statement of it is such as to render it both intelligible, and palpably absurd. As however in the case of the self-contradictory proposition, that "three infinite Minds are only one infinite Mind," so, in the present instance, I shall explain the passages, produced to prove the Supreme Divinity of Christ, in order to afford the fullest satisfaction to the ingenuous enquirer, but chiefly to rescue the Divine Unity from violation, and the Scriptures from contempt.

In the First of the three Discourses, intended to evince by separate proofs the Supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ, Mr. Wardlaw (p. 35) "confines himself to certain *general views* of the subject, which seem to him to contain in them very powerful evidences of the truth to be established." He proposes "afterwards to enter into a more particular examination of some of those passages of Scripture, which form the *more direct and immediate proofs.*" We shall take under our consideration his *general views*, after we have examined his more *direct and immediate proofs.* In the mean time it will be necessary to bestow a few animadversions upon his preliminary remarks. (p. 35—38.)

After requesting the attention of his hearers to "*the current language of the New-Testament,*" relative to the Divinity of Christ, Mr. Wardlaw produces in a string *nearly all the principal passages*, which are usually brought forward for the purpose, including some, (John i. 14. iii. 13.) which at the utmost prove nothing more than our Saviour's *pre-existence.* But, however adapted to make a strong *impression* on the minds of the inconsiderate, it is perfectly useless to recite in an animated popular harangue a long list of disputed passages, without any comment or examination, when they will be understood merely

according to the prejudices of the hearers, or the emphasis given by the Speaker. It is worse than useless to bring forward not twice as many *verses* as the New Testament contains *books*, and to say that these are a specimen of its "*current* language," although they have been generally regarded as *the capital proofs* of the doctrine in question.

After quoting these passages "as they presented themselves to his mind," Mr. Wardlaw argues from them and from others of a similar kind afterwards to be introduced, by asking the following "*general question.*"

"Is there," says he, "any previous probability, that so great a number of passages, scattered throughout the Bible, and all bearing, directly, although in different ways, on the same important point, should have been, without exception, either *interpolated*, *corrupted*, or *misunderstood ?*—that no criticks, ancient or modern, have been sufficiently acute to discover, or sufficiently candid to admit, those manifold corruptions and interpolations, of verses and of chapters, which have been detected and exposed by the Editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament, and the friends of their system ?—that all translators, into English, French, Latin, Italian, German, and other languages, have either wilfully or ignorantly erred ; these editors, and other translators of their party, alone excepted ?—that the whole host of interpreters of the Scriptures have, either through ignorance, or prejudice, or inattention and carelessness, totally misapprehended the true sense of these passages ; except the very few, who deny that in any one of them the Divinity of Jesus Christ is at all to be found ? Are such suppositions as these, I ask, when applied to so large a number of passages, in themselves probable ?—or are they quite consistent, in those who make them, with any thing like a becoming measure of modesty and humility ?" (p. 41, 42.)

The question, it is evident, includes, and was intended by the author to be understood as including, this positive affirmation; that, with the exception of those very few criticks, who have denied, that the Divinity of Jesus Christ is any where taught in the Scriptures, all translators and interpreters in all ages, nations, and languages, have understood as evidences of the Divinity of Christ those passages, which Mr. Wardlaw produces as such in his Discourses.

In reply to this assertion I offer the following remarks.

1. If the Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ be stated in the Bible in such direct terms as its advocates assert, what occasion is there to produce the opinion of *commentators* at all? Why may not the Scriptures be left to speak for themselves, and to strike the mind with irresistible conviction? Mr. Wardlaw, in his Preface, (p. ix.) observes, that on such topicks as these the Bible cannot require "*the commentary of ancient opinion.*" Why then has he here made such an impressive *appeal* to that commentary?

2. By what authority has Mr. Wardlaw advanced these bold and confident assertions? How many of the orthodox translators and interpreters has he consulted? I believe, a very small proportion of them. My own very limited knowledge of these subjects enables me to reply, that many of the passages produced have been admitted by some of the most learned and respected Trinitarian criticks to contain no evidence whatever of the Divinity of Christ; and, if I were to employ a few years in that laborious examination of all the translations and commentaries of the orthodox in all ages and in all languages, which would alone qualify any one to assert, that they either do, or do not, agree in presenting Trinitarian expositions, I am inclined to think, that the host of witnesses to the Unitarian doctrine from among them would be almost as numerous as the whole body of authors,

who have professedly opposed the doctrine of the divinity of Christ.

3. I deny, (and every one acquainted with theology, or with the literary history of mankind, will join with me,) that the opinion of Unitarian criticks is of such little weight as Mr. Wardlaw represents. Though comparatively few, their inferiority in numbers is perhaps overbalanced by their acknowledged learning and judgment. Let any one cast his eye upon the following list, and say whether a more venerable body of witnesses ever appeared in support of any doctrine; Abauzit; Abernethy; Acontius; Lord Barrington; Dr. Benson; John Biddle; Bonnet of Geneva; Dr. Chandler; Dr. Samuel Clarke; Bishop Clayton; Chillingworth; Crellius; John Elwall; Thomas Emlyn; Dr. Enfield; Mr. Firmin; Bishop Hoadley; Dr. John Jebb; Dr. Kippis; Dr. Lardner; Bishop Law; Dr. Leland; Mr. Lindsey; Mr. Locke; Mr. Lowman; Sir Isaac Newton; Mr. Tho. F. Palmer; William Penn; Mr. Pierce; Dr. Price; Dr. Priestley; Sandius; Servetus; Socinus; Mr. Henry Taylor; Dr. John Taylor; Dr. Watts; Mr. Wasse; Mr. Whiston; Dr. Whitby:*—to whom might be added many others, whose merits have been little known, only because they belonged to the minority.

I present this list of illustrious and venerated names, not for the sake of an empty boast, nor to decide the questions in dispute by great human authorities, but simply to counteract the false impression, which Mr. Wardlaw's treatment of Unitarian divines is adapted to produce. It ought also to be considered, that the opinion of a man of irreproachable character and undisputed talents, who has been educated in the belief of a certain system, but has afterwards been induced to abandon that system in consequence of diligent and serious inquiry, is certainly of far greater weight than the opinion of one, who abides by the faith

* See note at the end of the volume.

which has been inculcated upon him from his infancy, and who consequently, according to what we know of human nature, must always lie under the suspicion of being biassed by prejudice.

In opposition to Mr. Wardlaw's representations let the candid Trinitarian consider the following account of the manner, in which Unitarians argue, written by one of the best men, who ever entered the lists against them. Let Unitarians also dwell upon this most beautiful and masterly portrait, and endeavour to deserve and maintain the good character as controversialists, which is here allowed them:

"To do right to the Writers on that side, I must own, that generally they are a pattern of the fair way of disputing, and of debating matters of religion without heat and unseemly reflections upon their adversaries.—They generally argue matters with that temper and gravity, and with that freedom from passion and transport which becomes a serious and weighty argument: and for the most part they reason closely and clearly, with extraordinary guard and caution, with great dexterity and decency, and yet with smartness and subtilty enough; with a very gentle heat, and few hard words: virtues to be praised wherever they are found, yea even in an enemy, and very worthy our imitation: in a word, they are the strongest managers of a weak cause and which is ill-founded at the bottom, that perhaps ever yet meddled with controversy: insomuch that some of the Protestants and the generality of the Popish writers, and even of the Jesuits themselves, who pretend to all the reason and subtilty in the world, are in comparison of them but mere *scolds* and *bunglers*. Upon the whole matter, they have but this one great defect, that they want a good cause and truth on their side; which if they had, they have reason, and wit, and temper enough to defend it."—Tillotson's Sermons on the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, V. I. fol. p. 449.

CHAPTER V.

EXAMINATION OF THE PASSAGES, IN WHICH THE PECULIAR TITLES OF DEITY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST.

I now proceed to examine the passages, which Mr. Wardlaw brings forward in proof of the Divinity of Christ. I shall endeavour to show, that they may all be easily reconciled to the clear and simple doctrines, stated in the Second Part of this Treatise. Whether, as Mr. Wardlaw asserts (p. 43, 131.) this attempt be "superlatively difficult," and will "employ and exhaust all the possible arts and resources of criticism," those persons, who are acquainted with criticism, must judge.

Our author proposes to establish his doctrine by showing, "that *the peculiar* NAMES, ATTRIBUTES, WORKS, and WORSHIP, of the True God, are distinctly ascribed in the Bible to Jesus Christ." (p. 55.)

First, he maintains, that the "NAMES AND TITLES, *belonging exclusively to the True God*, are in the Scriptures ascribed to Jesus Christ." He informs his readers, that, "agreeably to the plan of *selection*, which he has prescribed to himself," he will confine their attention to two of these, *viz.* GOD and JEHOVAH. He seems to forget, that, even by his own subsequent concessions, "GOD" is not a Name, which belongs "exclusively" to the Supreme Being. The title is applied in the Sacred Scriptures, not to him alone, but to some of his creatures. In proof of this fact the Unitarians appeal to no less an authority than that of Jesus Christ himself, who affirms, that *in the Scriptures those persons are called* GODS, *unto whom the word of God came.* John x. 35. If his testimony require, or admit of, any

confirmation, it is afforded by the following passages; Gen. iii. 5. "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as GODS, knowing good and evil." Ex. vii. 1. "And the LORD said unto Moses, 'See, I have made thee a GOD to Pharaoh.'" xv. 11. "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the GODS." xxi. 6. "Then his master shall bring him unto the *Judges*," literally, "unto the GODS." xxii. 8, 9. "If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the *Judges*, (literally, unto the GODS,) to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods: For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the *Judges;* (literally, before the GODS) and whom the *Judges* (literally, the GODS) shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour." Ver. 28. "Thou shalt not revile the GODS, nor curse the *ruler* of thy people." Deut. x. 17. "For the LORD, your God, is God of GODS." 1 Samuel ii. 25. "If one man sin against another, the *Judge* (literally, the GOD) shall judge him." xxviii. 13. "I saw *Gods* (properly, a GOD) ascending out of the earth." Ps. viii. 5. "For thou hast made him a little lower *than the angels*," literally, "than the GODS." lxxxii. 1. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the GODS." Ver. 6. "I have said, 'Ye are GODS.'" lxxxvi. 8. "Among the GODS there is none like unto thee, O LORD." xcvii. 7. "Worship him, all ye GODS." Ver. 9. "Thou, LORD, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all GODS." Here are seventeen cases, (and I think it probable, that there are more,) of the use of the word GOD in the sense, affixed to it by our Saviour. It is therefore undeniable, that the name may be given, according to the practice of the Sacred Writers, to all persons, whether Angels, Prophets, or Judges, *to whom the*

word of God comes, or, *who are authorized, commissioned, and inspired to declare the will of God to mankind. In this sense* all Unitarians admit and maintain, that Jesus Christ was A GOD. The mere application to him of this title consequently proves nothing. As a learned Unitarian author observes, "The question is not, Whether Christ is called GOD in Scripture, for that is undeniable; but, *In what sense* the word is to be understood." (H. Taylor's Considerations on Ancient and Modern Creeds compared, p. 124.) The established principles of criticism require, that we should prefer that interpretation, which is agreeable to the clear and universally acknowledged doctrine of the Scriptures, before that, which is contrary to any known truth, or which is attended with any considerable difficulties. Since therefore it is a fact, about which there is among Christians no dispute, that Jesus was a person, "unto whom the word of God came;" since we know, that he vindicated the application to himself of the title GOD, taken in *this* sense (John x. 34, 35.) and since we do not know, until it be proved, that the title belongs to him in any *other* sense; we ought thus to understand it, wherever we find it applied to him in the Sacred Scriptures, *unless there be some particular circumstances in the mode of application*, which point him out as THE SUPREME GOD, THE ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD, THE GOD OF GODS, or THE GOD WHO IS ABOVE ALL.

I now proceed to examine the passages, in which this title has been commonly supposed to be applied to Jesus Christ. I shall show, that in the few instances, in which it really is given to him, there is nothing in the mode or circumstances of the application, sufficient to prove his Supreme Divinity.

Isa. vii. 14. "Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a

son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL." This passage is applied to the birth of our Saviour in the Gospel of Matthew, ch. i. 23. It is referred to by Mr. Wardlaw repeatedly as an evidence of the Divinity of Christ. See p. 39, 54, 64, 79, 96, 107, 133, 203, 218, 238, 333.

Isa. ix. 6. " For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, THE MIGHTY GOD, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Upon this passage also Mr. Wardlaw lays great stress ; p. 64, 86, 133, 136. To illustrate the sense, in which the title " MIGHTY GOD" is applied, he compares it with Isa. x. 21. where the same phrase occurs ; " The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the MIGHTY GOD."

If, as I have shown above, the title God belonged to all, " unto whom the word of God came," these two passages would present no obstacle to our belief in the Unitarian doctrine, even though it were certain, that in each instance the original text is uncorrupted, the English translation correct, and the designations, " IMMANUEL" and " MIGHTY GOD," really intended to be descriptive of the *nature of Christ*. These titles would only convey the same ideas, which were expressed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, when they exclaimed, " A GREAT PROPHET is risen up among us," and by the two disciples, (Luke xxiv. 19.) who described Jesus of Nazareth as "A PROPHET MIGHTY *in deed and word*."

I must however confess, (although by so doing I shall probably rather weaken than confirm my argument in the apprehension of some readers,) that, as it appears to me, the word GOD was not intended, in the *former* instance to be descriptive of the person of Christ, and in the latter there is some doubt, whether it be applied to Christ at all.

In order to perceive the true meaning of IMMANUEL, it is necessary to consider the singular manner, in which *proper names* were formed and applied by the ancient Hebrews. It was common among them to give to their children names, which were in reality short sentences, expressive of some Divine favour conferred at the time of the child's birth. Thus Hagar called her new born son, ISHMAEL, which is, being interpreted, GOD HATH HEARD !—an exclamation, expressive of her joy, that God had heard her affliction. (Gen. xvi. 11.) Agreeably to the same idiom most other Scripture names are to be understood.

In the third verse of the Chapter, in which IMMANUEL occurs, mention is made of one of the sons of Isaiah under the name of SHEAR-JASHUB. This name is a complete sentence. Literally translated it is, A REMNANT SHALL RETURN. The son of Isaiah was called by this singular appellation, in order that the great and consolatory fact of the *return of a remnant* of the Jewish nation from captivity, which was the frequent burthen of his prophecy, might, by the appearance of his son, bearing this expressive name, be often recalled to his mind and to the minds of his countrymen. Also in the next Chapter, which is a continuation of the same prophecy and relates to the same events, we are informed, that Isaiah had another son, concerning whom the LORD said to him, (ver. 3.) Call his name, MAHER SHALAL HASH BAZ. This signifies, THE SPOILING HASTENETH, THE PREYING COMETH QUICKLY. The Divine command was intended and understood as an intimation, that, soon after this child's birth, the Jews would be victorious over their enemies, and the time of spoiling their vanquished foes would arrive. Accordingly, the reason for giving this name is assigned in the next verse in the following terms ; "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria."

In consequence of this singular custom of giving names to children descriptive of the circumstances of their birth, it became usual with the prophets to denote an event, which which was about to accompany the birth of a child, by saying, that the child would have *a name descriptive of that event*. Among the Jews this remarkable mode of speaking was well understood, although it is little adapted to the habits of our age and nation. These facts must be borne in mind as leading to the exact interpretation of the title IMMANUEL, which signifies, GOD IS WITH US. It was intended to signify, that, at the time of the child's birth, *God would be with his people by extraordinary manifestations of his favour.* Hence the Prophet, in the next Chapter, foretelling the defeat of the enemies of Judah, assigns its cause by repeating the *affirmation*, GOD IS WITH US, or IMMANUEL, which a little before he employs as the *name* of the child, ver. 9, 10. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: FOR IMMANUEL! GOD IS WITH US!"

It is generally agreed, that *in its primary application* this passage related to the birth of a child within a few years from the publication of the prophecy. Bishop Lowth remarks, that, though "not excluding a higher secondary sense, *the obvious and literal* meaning of the prophecy is this; that within the time that a young woman, now a virgin, should conceive and bring forth a child, and that child should arrive at such an age as to distinguish between good and evil, *that is*, within a few years, (compare ch. viii. 4.) the enemies of Judah should be destroyed." As a sign of the destruction of the enemies of Judah, the child, to be

born at that time, was to be called IMMANUEL! GOD IS WITH US! and all that was meant by the exclamation, GOD IS WITH US! was, that God would at that time appear in a remarkable manner as the protector and benefactor of his people. When applied according to the "*higher secondary sense*" of the prophecy, it had the same meaning. It signified, that, *when the Messiah arose, God would bestow great blessings upon mankind.* In this sense all serious Unitarians entertain the most grateful conviction, that GOD WAS, and so long as the Gospel of his Son shall continue to illuminate, console, and reclaim mankind, that HE IS WITH US.

Thus, I have no doubt, the passage of Isaiah was understood by the writer, who has applied it to the birth of Jesus Christ. At the same time I am aware, that this interpretation is by no means *obvious* to those, who have not paid much attention to the idioms of the Scriptures, and that it may easily be held up to ridicule by the inconsiderate.

Bishop Lowth observes concerning this portion of the prophecies of Isaiah, (ch. vii—ix. 6.) that there are in it "many and great difficulties." The verse, which is quoted to prove the Divinity of Christ on account of the occurrence in it of the phrase, "*mighty God*," although produced by the ignorant with the most triumphant and unreflecting confidence, will probably be allowed by all competent judges to be attended with as great difficulties as any other verse in this confessedly obscure portion of Sacred Scripture. I am sensible, that it would be highly presumptuous in me to attempt to decide the various questions relating to it, about which the most eminent criticks both in foreign countries and in our own, have differed and continue to differ; such as, Whether the word AL, translated GOD, to which there is nothing corresponding in any of

the ancient Greek versions, be a genuine part of the Hebrew text; Whether, supposing it to be genuine, it ought not to be translated a "RULER," since this is a very common acceptation of the term; and, Whether the titles, contained in this verse, were not intended to describe, at least according to their primary signification, the character of Hezekiah, or some other distinguished person born at the time when the prophecy was uttered. Without endeavouring to settle questions, upon which those men, who are the best qualified to decide, speak with the greatest diffidence, I shall only say, that our firm belief in the sole Supreme Divinity of the Father and the subordination of Jesus Christ ought not to be shaken by the evidence of a passage, which is allowed to be attended with many difficulties, and in which, at the very utmost, the application of the title "*mighty God*" to Jesus of Nazareth would only prove him to be a person, unto whom the word of God came.

Other supposed applications of the title "*God*" to Jesus in connexion with *Jehovah*, the incommunicable name of the Supreme Deity, will be considered among the proofs, that Jesus is called Jehovah. We now proceed to the passages of the *New* Testament, in which Jesus is said to be called, or is really called by the name "*God*."

John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Quoted by Mr. Wardlaw, p. 39, 58—63, 133.)

Although great respect is due to the opinion of those learned and excellent men, who have thought, that "the Word," here spoken of, is the *Reason* or *Wisdom* of the Deity, yet I entertain no doubt, that it is intended as a designation of Jesus Christ, the preacher of the Word. But, even if there were any occasion to retain the common translation, this single passage would not be sufficient to

prove, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God. As we interpret the phrase, "This is my body," to signify, "This *represents* my body," because a regard to the preservation of consistency and rationality in the doctrines of the Gospel, requires this acceptation of our Saviour's language; so we ought to interpret the assertion, that "the Word was God," as meaning only, that "the Word *represented* God." Such would be the proper mode of considering the passage, if there were reason to believe, that the term GOD is here used according to its highest sense as an appellation of the Supreme Deity.

It however appears to me, that the rules of criticism lead to that translation of the last clause, upon which Mr. Wardlaw has bestowed the most copious animadversions, *viz.* "the Word was *a God*." It is, as I have before observed, an established principle of interpretation, that from among the various senses, in which we know any word to be used, we ought in each case to select that, which affords a meaning, agreeable to the clear dictates of common sense and the admitted doctrines of Holy Scripture. We are assured by abundant and irrefragable proofs, both that the term *God* is used in Scripture to signify "any person, who is authorized, commissioned, and inspired to declare the will of Jehovah to mankind," and also that our Lord Jesus Christ was such a person. This explanation of the passage therefore is free from every objection. On the contrary, we do not know, that Jesus Christ was Jehovah, and consequently we are not justified in understanding the phrase as implying such a doctrine.

It has been remarked by Origen and Eusebius,* followed by some of the moderns, that the lower sense of the

* "Σαφως δε παριστη οιος τις ην, (scilicet, ὁ Λογος,) επισυναπτων εξης και λεγων. 'Και Θεος ην ὁ λογος. δυναμεις γουν ειπειν, Και 'Ο Θεος ην ὁ λογος.' μετα της του αρθρου προσθηκης· ει γε ἐν και ταυτον ηγειτο τον πατερα ειναι και τον υιον, αυτον τε

word THEOS in the last clause of the verse is indicated *by the want of the definite article.* Those who know, that the word THEOS commonly has the article prefixed in the original, when the Supreme Being is intended, and who have consulted the observations on the force of the article, collected by Wetstein from the ancient fathers, will not be disposed to deny the propriety of this observation. Mr. Wardlaw however treats it as denoting, not only a want of candour and fairness, but even an ignorance of the ordinary rules of Greek syntax. Surely he did not know, that the authors, against whom these censures are directed, were some of the most illustrious and learned men, who ever used the Greek language *as their vernacular tongue*, who also addressed their remarks to persons *familiar with that language from their infancy*, and in opposition to whom *Mr. Wardlaw's* assertions, and even *Dr. Middleton's*, are not worth a rush. Although the mere names of ORIGEN and EUSEBIUS will be sufficient in the ears of all, who have the slightest tincture of theological learning, to drown at once the feeble diminutive accents of our worthy author, yet I shall for a few moments detain his remarks from the concealment, into which they are fast hastening, in order to observe in reply to them, that his rule about the rejection of

ειναι τον λογον τον επι παντων Θεον" etc. *that is*, "The Evangelist has clearly shown what is the *nature* of the Word, by subjoining, 'And the Word was *a God*;' although he might have said 'And the word was GOD,' with the addition of the article, if he had thought, that the Father and the Son were one and the same, and that the Word is GOD OVER ALL." —EUSEBIUS DE ECCLES. THEOL. L. II. c. 17.

From the argument of the venerable Father in this passage it is plain, that he perceived no violation of the rules of syntax in the addition of the article; and upon a matter of this kind it is impossible, that he could have been mistaken. The observations of Origen, in his Commentary on John, are precisely to the same purpose. They are too long to quote, but may be seen in De la Rue's edition, Vol. IV. p. 50. 51.

the article in the predicate of a proposition is completely fallacious; that, for an instance exactly in point, we need go no further than the *text* of his discourse, which "for the sake of easy reference" he has printed in the original Greek at the bottom of page 38; (ουτος εστιν ὁ αληθινος θεος, και ἡ ζωη αιωνιος:) that the sentiment, "the Word was *a god*," could not be expressed in any other way than that employed by the Evangelist; (θεος ην ὁ λογος;) whereas the sentiment, "the Word was GOD," might have been expressed without ambiguity by the introduction of the article, (thus, ὁ λογος ην ὁ θεος,) and this arrangement would have been indisputably correct and grammatical.

But, although the want of the definite article in this instance ought to be allowed *some weight* in favour of the Unitarian interpretation, I do not imagine it to be a *decisive* circumstance: for I am aware of the justice of the following observations of the learned Bishop Pearson; "We must not think to decide this controversy by the articles, ὁ, ἡ, το, of which the sacred penmen were not curious, and the transcribers have been very careless." Pearson on the Creed, p. 150, note.

Mr. Wardlaw further objects to the translation proposed by Unitarians, that it attributes to an inspired author "the very language of paganism." But let the reader turn back to the passages above quoted, in which the word "*God*" is acknowledged by all to be used in this inferiour sense; and let him say whether the charge is not equally applicable to them. "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods?" "For Jehovah, your God, is God of gods." "Worship him, all ye gods." What language, we may ask in the spirit of Mr. Wardlaw's objection, could be more "favourable, in the first impression which it necessarily makes upon the mind, to the notion of a supreme and of subordinate deities?"—"Thou shalt not revile the gods." "God

standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods." "I have said, Ye are gods." How is it possible, that authors, writing under the guidance of the spirit, could employ language, which so plainly countenances the heathen idea, that Kings and Magistrates were an inferiour order of Divinities? The proper answer to this, and every such objection, is, that we are required to make some use of our understandings in interpreting the Scriptures, so as to make them consistent with themselves and with the clear dictates of reason.

Mr. Wardlaw affirms, that the occurrences of the word "*God*" in the inferiour sense, "as applied, for instance, to Angels and to Magistrates, are very rare, and that they are uniformly in such circumstances as at once to preclude the possibility of any pernicious mistake." These "very rare" occurrences however are far more numerous than the instances of the application of the name to *Jesus* in any sense; and I deny, that the security from errour is greater in the various passages, which I have quoted, than in the disputed words of the Evangelist John. On the contrary, the misinterpretation of his language is particularly guarded against by the assertion, which goes before and follows after it, that "the Word was *with God*." If Jesus Christ was *with* the Supreme Deity, and could not be the same being whom he was *with*, the context itself demonstrates the necessity of interpreting the last clause to signify only, that he was the medium of Divine communications to mankind.

The next instance of the application of the name "*God*" to our blessed Saviour, is in the address of Thomas. John xx. 28. "And Thomas answered and said unto him, 'My Lord and my GOD!'" (Produced by Mr. Wardlaw, p. 114—126, 139.)

Leaving every reader at full liberty to judge for himself, and retaining the right of changing my opinion, if at any future time I shall see fit, I only remark upon this passage without stating all my reasons, that these words appear to me to have been addressed by Thomas *to Christ*, and may be justly considered both as *an exclamation* expressive of his wonder and delight, and also as *a confession*, that Jesus was his lord and his god. But it is needless to dispute, that, when Thomas addressed Jesus as his lord, or master, and his god, he might mean only, that Jesus was *his inspired instructer in matters of religion.* Agreeably therefore to the principles, which have been before stated, his words ought to be understood according to this simple and reasonable interpretation.

I should have admired Mr. Wardlaw's observations upon this text as candid and for the most part just, if he had not unfortunately added to them the following note, which it is necessary for me to produce in order to do justice to the editors of the "Improved Version."

"The note of the Improved Version on the words of Thomas to Christ, is very remarkable, on account of the reference which it contains to the authority of *Beza*, in favour of their being an exclamation. On this reference Mr. Nares observes as follows:—'It is exceedingly true that Beza says it is an exclamation, and therefore he corrects the vulgate, and renders it in the vocative, "Domine mi, et Deus mi;" but, observing that the context expressly says they were spoken αυτῳ, *to him*, that is, to *Christ*, he says, "Hæc igitur verba quæ sequuntur non sunt tantum admirantis Thomæ, ut *hunc locum eludebant Nestoriani*, sed ipsum illum Jesum ut verum Deum ac Dominum suum compellantis. Male, igitur, vulgata interpretatur hunc locum recto casu, *Dominus meus et Deus meus:* nec alius est locus in his libris expressior, de Christo, ut vero Deo, invo-

cando."—This is what I find in Beza, concerning this exclamation. It was, he says, *non tantum*, not merely an exclamation, but an actual address of Thomas *to Jesus*, calling him both his *Lord and his God ;* an indisputable precedent for the invoking of Christ, *ut Deus verus*, as the true God. I shall venture,' adds Mr. Nares, ' to lay it down as a rule, for all readers of this new Version, to examine the references.' Nares' Remarks on the Improved Version, page 197."

Unwilling to believe without proof, that the editors of the Improved Version were guilty of the flagrant carelessness or fraud, which is here imputed to them, I consulted both them and Beza. I found with no small surprise, that the charge of misrepresenting Beza, if applicable to any one, falls upon the venerable Archbishop Newcome. The editors of the Improved Version, who throughout their work make continual use of his translation and commentary, *have only quoted the note in question from him and marked it with the greatest distinctness as a quotation. I* therefore must beg leave to advise the reader *always to examine Mr. Wardlaw's and Mr. Nares' references.*

The next passage of the New Testament, in which the title *God* is asserted by Trinitarians to be given to Jesus, is Rom. ix. 5. " Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, WHO IS OVER ALL GOD BLESSED FOR EVER." (Quoted by Mr. Wardlaw, p. 29, 30, 40, 65—68, 133, 406, 407.)

If there were any evidence, that this translation is correct, here would be a case in point ; the words of the Apostle would present a clear and valid argument for the Supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ. For in this instance we find the name " GOD" employed in circumstances, which prove it to belong to the uncreated Jehovah. " The GOD WHO IS OVER ALL," (ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς) is His appropriate

and peculiar designation. But the utmost, that can be said to vindicate this rendering is, that it does not violate the rules of grammar or the idioms of the Greek language, and therefore *may possibly* be the true translation. I have no doubt, that a person familiarly acquainted with Greek, and free from any previous bias to the Trinitarian doctrine, would without hesitation understand the last clause *as an abrupt ascription of praise to the God who is above all.* My reasons are briefly these; 1st, because such ascriptions of praise are very frequent in the writings of the Old and New Testament and in all Jewish compositions; 2d, Because they almost uniformly *want the substantive verb*, (εστω or ων,) as in this instance; 3d, Because the periphrasis here used as a name of Deity, "THE GOD WHO IS ABOVE ALL," (ὁ ων επι παντων θεος,) or phrases almost exactly the same with it, such as (ὁ επι παντων θεος and ὁ επι πασι θεος,) are expressions of perpetual occurrence in Greek writings upon religious subjects, which are universally understood as designations of the Supreme Deity, and are employed to distinguish him from all the beings, to whom the name (θεος) *God* was applied in a subordinate sense; 4th, Because in all such ascriptions of praise the words "*for ever*," or the equivalent expressions, if introduced at all, are placed *at the end of the sentence* as in this example; 5th, Because the position of these words at the end of the sentence naturally, though not necessarily, draws the participle(ευλογητος) "*Blessed*," which they qualify, *to the same quarter;* 6th, Because in Ps. lxviii. 19. (Κυριος ὁ θεος ευλογητος) the participle is placed *in the latter part of the sentence* by the Septuagint translators, contrary to the assertion of Dr. Whitby in his Commentary; 7th, Because, although the participle comes *first* in every other instance, a sufficient reason for its being so placed may in almost all these cases be assigned, *viz.* that the name of God is connected by the relative pronoun (ὁς) with one

or more clauses, the interposition of which would remove the participle to too great a distance from its noun, if it were thrown back to the end of the sentence.

These reasons appear to me to have so much weight, that, if I were not checked by a regard to the opinions of those learned men, who have embraced different views, I should consider this passage *as scarcely even ambiguous*. If it be ambiguous, the rule to be followed is to choose that translation, which is agreeable *to the known sentiments of the writer*.

I therefore, who am assured, that an *ascription of praise* to the Supreme God was conformable to the opinions of Paul, but not, that he believed *Jesus Christ to be the Supreme God*, am justified in adopting the Unitarian translation.

Further, where the opinions of the writer are unknown, the best method of ascertaining the sense of a dubious expression is to enquire how it was understood by those persons, *to whom he directly wrote*. In the present case we have unusual advantages for the determination of this question. Clement, whom Paul mentions (Phil. iv. 3.) as one of his fellow-labourers, was afterwards the Bishop of the Church at Rome, to which society this Epistle was addressed. (See Rom. i. 7.) There is extant another Epistle, written by Clement in the name of the Christians at Rome to the Church at Corinth. It contains various sentiments and expressions, derived from Paul's Epistle to the Romans. (See Lardner's Credibility, Ch. II.) Among others is the following clear allusion to the very passage, which we are now examining, Rom. ix. 4, 5. After speaking of the faith and piety of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *the privileges*, which in consequence of their virtues were bestowed upon their posterity, are thus described. "From them came all the priests and Levites, who minister at the altar of God; from him (Jacob) as concerning the flesh came the Lord

Jesus; from him came Kings, and Rulers, and Leaders, in the line of Judah."* The expressions, here used by Clement, when writing in the name of that Church, to which the Epistle of Paul is inscribed, afford a strong presumption, that both he and they conceived the sentence alluded to, to end with the words, "as concerning the flesh Christ came." For how can we believe, that they would have abruptly broken off the quotation, when by so doing they omitted the mention of that circumstance, which was beyond comparison the most glorious privilege of the decendants of Jacob, *viz.* the manifestation of the Supreme God in mysterious union with the human nature of an Israelite?

The manner, in which this passage was understood by the primitive believers, may also be inferred with considerable certainty from this fact, that many of the most eminent Christian writers of the four first centuries (see Wetstein ad loc.) deny in decided terms, that Jesus Christ was "THE GOD WHO IS OVER ALL," (ὁ επι παντων θεος) maintaining, that this title belongs exclusively to *God the Father*, and that to transfer it to *Christ* is unpardonable rashness and impiety. Such assertions they would not have advanced, if they had supposed the words "*God who is over all*" in this passage to refer to our Saviour.

Lastly, it may be remarked, that the interpretation, which I defend, has been approved not only by the generality of

* "Εξ αυτων γαρ ἱερεις και λευιται παντες οἱ λειτουργουντες τῳ θυσιαστηριῳ του Θεου· ἐξ αυτου ὁ Κυριος Ιησους το κατα σαρκα· ἐξ αυτου βασιλεις, και ἀρχοντες και ἡγουμενοι, κατα τον Ιουδαν·"—CLEMENTIS EPIST. AD COR. c. XXXII.

The expression, κατα τον Ιουδαν, "*in the line of Judah*," in the last clause, assists to explain το κατα σαρκα, "*as concerning the flesh*," in the second clause; and, so far as I can judge, justifies the translation "*by natural descent*," which is given in the Improved Version. Mr. Wardlaw however affirms, that to understand the expression in this sense is taking "a most arbitrary freedom with the words themselves, which is utterly inadmissible, and deserving of the severest reprehension.

avowed Unitarians, and by some very celebrated men of suspected orthodoxy, such as Grotius and Wetstein, but also by three at least of the most learned divines belonging to the Trinitarian party, namely Erasmus, Bucer, and Le Clerc.

The various evidences, which I have here brought together to determine the true method of translating this verse, leave in my mind not the smallest doubt, that instead of "WHO IS OVER ALL GOD BLESSED FOR EVER," the translation ought to be, "GOD WHO IS OVER ALL BE BLESSED FOR EVER." If this is the meaning of St. Paul, how bold, how rash, are Mr. Wardlaw's animadversions. He affirms, that the clause, so translated, is "deprived of all force and meaning whatever," and "converted into a useless and unnatural pleonasm, which adds weakness instead of strength and propriety to the expression and the sentiment."

The next example of the application of the title *God* to Jesus is Heb. i. 8. "But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever.'" (Produced p. 40, 68—71, 133, 181.)

Grotius, Dr. Samuel Clarke, and Mr. Pierce, with many other eminent men, have remarked, that this passage may with equal propriety be translated, "*God is thy throne* for ever and ever." How does Mr. Wardlaw reply to their observation?

First, by his manner of printing their proposed translation;—"*God is thy throne ! !*"—as if the most learned and respected theologians, who ever wrote, were to be confuted by sticking up a few notes of admiration.

Secondly, by charging them with ignorance of Greek and "a glaring departure from the established practice of Greek syntax." The man, who with unhesitating dogmatism prefers such accusations as these even against Grotius and Samuel Clarke, is of course infinitely above my notice;

nor shall I venture to contend with him any more about the use of the definite article in the predicate of a proposition. I may however state, that one or two passages have come in my way quite incidentally, while I have been writing this Treatise, and request him to say, how the article got into the predicates of the following propositions; Rev. xix. 10. ἡ γαρ μαρτυρια του Ιησου εστι το πνευμα της προφητειας. 1 Cor. xi. 3. παντος ανδρος ἡ κεφαλη ὁ Χριστος εστι. I would also advise any of my readers, who thinks that he understands Greek, to look at these passages; and then he may consult Dr. Middleton and the Eclectick Review, *if he pleases.*

Although there is no disputing the observation of the learned men above referred to, that the original may with equal *grammatical* propriety be translated "*God is thy throne*," and although nothing can be more puerile than Mr. Wardlaw's objection, that the expression "*God is the stability of thy throne* FOR EVER AND EVER," conveys no sense in the least degree peculiar, because God is the stability of *all* thrones FOR A LIMITED TIME; yet the want of a parallel form of expression inclines me to prefer the common translation, "*Thy throne*, O GOD, *is for ever and ever.*"

I shall have occasion in the latter part of this Chapter to show, that the words, with which the quotation is introduced, "*Unto the Son he saith*," do not denote an *address* to the Son. But at present the only question to be determined is, Whether the word "GOD" is here to be understood *in its highest sense* as denoting the Supreme Divinity, or *in its inferiour sense* as signifying a person, authorized, commissioned, and inspired, to declare the will of God to mankind. In order to remove every doubt upon this subject, it appears only necessary to bring forward the entire quotation; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom:

thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; *therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*"—Can the all-perfect Jehovah be *anointed?* Can any thing be imparted to him, or his eternal glory receive any increase? Is there any being in existence, who can be called his GOD? Can the God, who is supreme over all, have a Superiour?—Either these questions must be answered in the affirmative, to the subversion of piety as well as common sense, or it must be conceded, that the invocation, "O GOD," is to be understood according to the inferiour sense of the name. Thus interpreted, the prophecy may be compared with the words of the angel to Mary, (Luke i. 32, 33.) denoting, that the dominion, which Christ was to exercise "for ever and ever," was to be *conferred upon him by a Superiour, even by "the Lord God."* "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Mr. Wardlaw properly omits taking any notice of 1 John iii. 16. "Hereby perceive we the love OF GOD, because he laid down his life for us," since there is nothing corresponding to the phrase "*of God*" in the original Greek.

We proceed therefore to 1 John v. 20. "We know, that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in (*or*, by) his Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God, and eternal life.*" (p. 35—39, 41, 56, 129.) Our author endeavours to confirm the application of the last sentence to Jesus Christ by two arguments.

First, he maintains, that the pronoun "*This*" ought to be referred to the nearest antecedent, which is "*Jesus Christ.*" To this argument I reply, in the first place, that the words "Jesus Christ" are marked as *doubtful* in

Griesbach's edition of the Greek Testament. Griesbach does not reject them from the text, but only gives it as his opinion, that their genuineness is *uncertain*, at the same time stating the evidence for that opinion. Now, if these words be omitted, the nearest antecedent is the word (αυτου) "*his*," which refers to *God*. There is however no occasion to have recourse to the supposition, that the words "*Jesus Christ*" are spurious. It is granted, that the pronoun does not always refer to the nearest antecedent. We have an instance to the contrary in the 2d Epistle of John, the 7th verse. "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist." In this verse, as in the passage under consideration, the nearest antecedent to the pronoun is "Jesus Christ." The same argument therefore, which is employed in the one case to prove, that Jesus is "*the true God*," would be equally valid in the other to prove, that he is "*a deceiver and an antichrist.*" Other examples of the use of (ουτος) "*This*" referring to the more remote antecedent, may be seen in Acts iv. 11. vii. 19. But, replies Mr. Wardlaw, the sense of these passages is clear; because by supposing the pronoun to refer to the nearest antecedent, you make the Scriptures speak nonsense.—True, my friend; and so do you, when you assert, that "THIS *is the true God*" signifies "*Jesus Christ* is the true God." A person, not previously instructed in the doctrines of Trinitarianism, would at the first glance perceive this sentiment to be so false and absurd, that he would immediately refer the pronoun to the more remote antecedent, forming an instantaneous judgment, that the Apostle did not intend to represent Jesus Christ as "*the true God*" any more than to describe him as "*a deceiver and an antichrist.*" The primitive Christians, who were equally strangers to both of these impossibilities, would

without hesitation refer the pronoun to the more remote antecedent in both cases alike. I maintain therefore with Mr. Belsham, that the cases are "*similar*," though by so doing I incur that most unreasonable charge, which you have directed against him, of a want of candour.

The second argument advanced to prove, that the person here asserted to be "the true God" is Jesus Christ, is that the same person is also called "*eternal life.*" The expression will be allowed by all to be figurative. It means, that the person, so called, was *the giver*, or *the promiser* of eternal life. It is maintained by Unitarians, as a great and leading principle of their system, that all the blessings, communicated to mankind *through Jesus Christ*, originate in the wisdom and goodness *of the one True God.* Agreeably to this general maxim, they assert, that *the Father* promises and gives eternal life *through Jesus Christ. The Father* therefore is *properly* "the eternal life:" *Jesus Christ* is also "the eternal life," *but in an inferiour sense.* Hence St. Paul observes, "Eternal life is *the gift of God* THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord."

But Mr. Wardlaw further objects, If the interpretation proposed by Unitarians be true, "*what occasion was there for the Apostle's remark?*" Against such reasonings we ought carefully to guard. If we study the Scriptures with true humility and piety, we shall never ask, What *occasion* is there for this or that? or encourage ourselves to suppose, that one observation may be misplaced, a second trivial, and a third unnecessary. We shall be thankful for every portion of God's word *as it is*, and endeavour to improve it wisely. Such questions might be raised by idle and impertinent readers against innumerable expressions in the Sacred Writings, owing in a great measure to the difference of style between them and modern compositions. In this particular instance however we have no opportunity for

exercising that humble and grateful spirit, which I am recommending; so obvious is the propriety and force of the Apostle's remark. He is not satisfied with mentioning the Supreme Being once or twice under the august title of "*him that is true*," but he repeats, "The being of whom I speak is the True God and the giver of eternal life," as a solemn admonition to adhere to his worship, to obey his will, and to seek his favour. Thus he naturally introduces the affectionate exhortation, "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*"

Mr. Wardlaw concludes the instances of the application of the title GOD to our blessed Lord, by producing a class of texts, in which the argument depends upon the supposed usage of the Greek language with respect to the *definite article*, "a usage," as he says, "ascertained beyond all controversy by the learning of recent criticks." He "mentions *only two* of these texts as a specimen of the whole."

2 Peter i. 1. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

A considerable number of the modern advocates of Trinitarianism have proposed to render the last clause, "through the righteousness *of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*" The Unitarians have allowed, that the original words *bear* this interpretation. Mr. Wardlaw in his usual positive manner asserts, "There cannot be a doubt, that, according to the established principles of Greek syntax, this is their only just translation."

Titus ii. 13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Here also many learned and excellent men among the orthodox have preferred to translate the last words, "the glorious appearing *of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*" The Unitarians admit, that this translation does not violate the grammatical construction. Mr. Wardlaw in a bolder tone asserts, that "to express the precise sense of the original, they ought to be thus rendered," and that, "if they be understood otherwise, they are unquestionably a misinterpretation."

The confident assertions of our author concerning the *established and incontrovertible rules* of the Greek language with regard to the definite article, ill agree with the remark of a Trinitarian critick of the highest celebrity, that "*it has puzzled all the grammarians to reduce the use of this article to any clear and certain rules.*" Lowth's English Grammar, note 3. I have already quoted a passage to the same effect from one of the most learned and able advocates of the Trinitarian system, Bishop Pearson; and I believe all the most eminent criticks agree with him concerning the irregular use of the article in the Greek Testament, although they state their opinions with that modest simplicity, which usually accompanies sound learning, and without any of the imposing airs of theological empiricism.

When I consider the subject without reference either to my own or any other system, my opinion upon these two passages is, that *the common translation* of them is *preferable*, although the *other* mode of rendering them does not violate any rule of syntax. I ground my judgment upon the following considerations. We find in the New Testament *numerous passages in which God and our Lord Jesus Christ are mentioned in conjunction.* While they resemble one another in this one circumstance, *they differ in an endless variety of ways respecting* THE USE OR THE OMISSION, *and also* THE ARRANGEMENT *of ar-*

ticles, pronouns, and adjectives. Owing to these irregularities, *some* of them are, *considered by themselves, ambiguous.* But *others* can only be translated in such a manner, as to make *a clear and marked distinction between God and our Lord Jesus Christ.* I conceive, that *the unambiguous examples* ought to serve as our guides towards the just interpretation *of those passages, in which the sense is not fixed by the grammatical construction.* For these reasons the received translation ought to be followed in the passages in question, even though no regard were paid to the doctrines of the Divine Unity and the inferiority of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Belsham has expressed his sentiments upon this controversy in the following terms;

"The author (Mr. Belsham) is not unapprized of the great zeal with which this argument for the proper deity of Christ, from the construction of the Greek article, has been lately resumed and pursued by that eminent philanthropist, Granville Sharp, Esq. and his learned coadjutors Bishop Burgess, Dr. Wordsworth, and Dr. Middleton. That many of the observations of these respectable writers are ingenious, acute, and just, as far as the Greek language is concerned, is, I believe, universally admitted. But the witty and shrewd writer of Six more Letters to Granville Sharp, under the signature of Gregory Blunt, has ably and amply refuted the argument derived from this principle in support to the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Indeed it is an indignity to the human understanding to maintain that a doctrine, which, if true, would shine conspicuously in every page of the New Testament, should depend for its evidence upon the critical use of the Greek article by the plain and unlettered writers of the New Testament; together with what would be equally necessary, the immaculate correctness of transcribers. If this is the state to which

the controversy is reduced, it would be better to give up the point at once. A doctrine of such magnitude as the proper deity of Christ, must have clearer and more substantial evidence, or none at all. That Dr. Middleton's theory of the Greek Article will not bear him out to the extent to which he has applied it, has been amply and satisfactorily shown in an able critique upon that learned and laborious treatise, by the hand of a master, in the Monthly Review, N. S. vol. lxii. See also Mr. Winstanly's able Vindication, &c. in reply to Mr. Sharp."—Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 229, note.

Every reader of good feelings and a tolerable impartial judgment must admire the handsome manner, in which Mr. Belsham speaks of the authors, who have advanced this new Theory of the Greek Article. Nor will any but the captious and irritable be offended at his observations upon the validity of a doctrine, in support of which such arguments are so strenuously urged. It seems to me, that the utmost Mr. Belsham can be charged with is one of those *strong* statements, or perhaps *over*-statements, to which every man is liable in defending his side of an interesting question. "The very head and front of his offending hath this extent, no more." Mr. Wardlaw however says, "Nothing can well be conceived more shamefully disingenuous." (p. 408.) I must inform him, that, if his expressions were criticised with equal rigour, he would bleed at every pore; for, page after page, I come to similar overstatements, although I cannot consent to weary myself and my readers with refuting them.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that Dr. Doddridge, though he has translated the last words of 2 Peter i. 1. "*of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,*" subjoins the following Note, in which he explains himself with his usual modesty and judgment. "The order of the original

words," says he, "*rather favours this translation*, though I confess it is not absolutely necessary, and it may be rendered as in our version, '*of God and our Saviour.*'" I produce this remark, not only as a pattern of the proper mode of speaking and writing in such cases, but because, in Mr. Wardlaw's Note E, Dr. Doddridge is introduced among a number of criticks, who have given the same translation of this passage, and who are held forth as forming "altogether a noble testimony against the Socinian impiety." I believe, this amiable and candid author would have been eager to decline the compliment. At any rate, his Note shows, that he did not consider this passage as *a proof* of the Divinity of Christ, and I should not be surprised, if *others* of this numerous band were impressed equally with him against their own will and conviction.

Jehovah, it is well known, is used in the Scriptures of the Old Testament as the peculiar and appropriate name of the one Supreme God. Mr. Wardlaw remarks, "If this name therefore is *directly given* in the Scriptures to the Messiah, to Jesus of Nazareth, the question of his Supreme Divinity ought to be decided." One expects this observation to be followed by some passage of Scripture asserting in plain terms, *that Jesus of Nazareth was Jehovah.* But, instead of *direct Scripture testimonies*, Mr. Wardlaw only brings forward *remote deductions*, formed by the comparison of one set of passages with another. We might reply, that arguments, so complicated, are not the proper kind of evidence to establish such an awful, stupendous, and infinitely important doctrine. But, if these arguments be examined, it will be found, that they are not only very perplexed, but completely fallacious.

1. Mr. Wardlaw's first argument to prove, that the title JEHOVAH is applied to our Saviour is the following. (p. 39, 73—75, 133.)

In Luke i. 16, 17. the Angel says to Zacharias concerning John, "Many of the children of Israel shall he turn *to the* LORD *their God; and he shall go before Him* in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, *to make ready a people prepared for the* LORD." This passage asserts, that John went before THE LORD GOD. The same truth is apparent from the words of the prophet Isaiah, (ch. xl. 3, 4.) the reference of which to John the Baptist is proved by Mat. iii. 3. Luke iii. 4, 5. John i. 23. "The voice of him that crieth, 'In the wilderness prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH, make straight in the desert a high way for our God: every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.'" Also, that John was sent before Jehovah, is evident from Mal. iii. 1. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me,—saith JEHOVAH of hosts."—But in other parts of the Evangelical History we find it asserted, that John was sent before CHRIST, which makes it strikingly evident, that Christ is Jehovah. "I am not the Christ," said the Baptist, "*but I am sent before him*," and, "that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." (See John iii. 28; i. 31.)

The argument may be thus summed up, *John went before* JEHOVAH; and *John went before* CHRIST; *therefore,* CHRIST IS JEHOVAH.—1 Sam. ii. 12. "*The sons of* ELI were *sons of* BELIAL;" *therefore,* ELI was BELIAL.—Ex. xx. 2. and Deut. v. 6. *He, who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, was* JEHOVAH; but, by Ex. xxxii. 7. xxxiii. 1. *He, who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, was* MOSES; *there-*

fore, MOSES was JEHOVAH.—Such are the endless absurdities, which would be derived from the Scriptures, by proceeding upon the principle of Mr. Wardlaw's argument, *that it is impossible for the same thing to be asserted in Scripture concerning two different beings.*

The language, employed by Isaiah to describe the office of John the Baptist, is conceived, I believe, by all commentators to allude to the practices, which were anciently adopted by the kings of the earth, when they visited distant countries. Owing to the want of *good roads* and other conveniences for travelling, they always sent before them *pioneers* to assist their journey *by filling up valleys and cutting down hills and precipices*, and by taking every other necessary step for their accommodation.* According to a figure of perpetual occurrence in the New Testament, Jehovah came at the commencement of the Gospel dispensation, travelling in the greatness of his might, to assume his righteous and benignant empire over the minds of men. John was sent before him *to prepare his way.* This office he discharged, (if we pursue the figure,) *by proclaiming, that* THE REIGN OF GOD (ἡ βασιλεια του Θεου) *was at hand*, and *by filling up the valleys and levelling the hills;* but, (if we speak literally,) *by calling men to repentance, by turning many of the children of Israel to the* LORD *their God, by exhorting fathers to perform the duties and exercise the affections which they owed to their children*, and *by converting the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.* In the beautiful address of the Angel to Zacharias, we find *figurative* blended with *literal* expressions. But the simple fact was, that the preaching of the Gospel was to produce *obedience to the laws of God*, and that John prepared for the

* See Schleusner's Lexicon, v. ὁδος, προερχομαι et προπορευομαι. Le Clerc, Mr. W. Lowth, and Bp. Lowth, on Isa. xl. 3. Beza, Le Clerc, Hammond, Wetstein, Grotius, and Whitby, on Mat. iii. 3. Whitby on Luke iii. 5.

erection of this spiritual kingdom. Understanding the metaphorical phrases according to this sense, (and I know not that any other interpretation has ever been proposed,) all Unitarians believe, that, at the promulgation of the Gospel, *Jehovah came to rule over the world*, and that *John went before him* as his messenger and pioneer *to prepare his way*; that *every valley was filled*, and *every mountain and hill made low*; that *the crooked paths were made straight*, and *the rough ways smooth*.

Unitarians also believe, that John was sent before CHRIST; and, if Christ be figuratively considered *as a king, coming to assert that dominion over mankind, which had been fraudulently and violently usurped by the tyrants Vice and Superstition*, the metaphor may be prolonged in this instance also, and it will follow, that John *cleared and levelled the way in order to facilitate the majestick march of this spiritual Sovereign*. The passage however, (John iii. 28.) which is used in relation to the coming of *Christ*, and which asserts that John was sent *before him*, does not seem to be founded upon this grand and beautiful imagery. It probably signified only, that John *began to preach before Jesus, and predisposed men's minds to acknowledge him as the Messiah*.

2. Heb. i. 10. "And, 'Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth.'" This passage is produced p. 40, 75, 84, 106, 107, 134, 136, 138.

I shall grant to Mr. Wardlaw, that the word LORD ought here to be considered as equivalent to JEHOVAH; nor am I disposed to consider this passage as a sudden *apostrophe* to God, because, although this interpretation is very suitable to the idiom of *our* language, I know of nothing parallel to it *in the Scriptures*. The only question therefore is, Whether this quotation was intended by the writer *as an address to Christ*. In order to settle this point, it is

necessary to fix the meaning of the words, by which the former quotation is introduced. In the common version they are translated, "*Unto the Son he saith.*" But the preposition Pros, here rendered *Unto*, often signifies *With reference to*, or *Concerning*. It is so used, for example, by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, (viii. 31.) where he asks, "What shall we *say to these things?*" The meaning evidently is, "What shall we say *concerning* these things?"* To determine whether Pros is so used in the clause translated, "Unto the son he saith," it is only requisite to go back to the preceding verse, in which the same preposition is used in the original, and certainly in the same sense: ver. 7. "And *of* the angels he saith," that is, *Concerning* the angels, or *With reference to* the angels. Without fear of being contradicted by any accurate scholar, I affirm, that the exact sense and only allowable translation of the inspired author's words is as follows:

Και μεν προς τους

Verse 7. And, on the one hand, concerning the

αγγελους λεγει·

angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, &c.

Δε προς τον υἱον

Ver. 8. But on the other hand, concerning the son, &c.†

3. The Evangelist John (xii. 37—41) makes the following remarks upon the obstinacy of the Jews in rejecting the miracles of Christ; "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which

* For other instances, see Schleusner's and Biel's Lexicons, v. Προς; Glassii Philol. Sacra, L. III. tract. 6. can. 5. Whitby on Heb. i. 7.

† Perhaps I might go farther. I am inclined to believe, that προς with an accusative is *never* used to denote *an address* to any one, this being signified by the dative case without any preposition. To introduce *an address to the Son*, the language of the writer would, I apprehend, have been τῳ δε υἱῳ λεγει.

he spake, 'Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 'He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.' These things said Esaias, *when he saw his glory*, and spake of him."

The word "*saw*" sometimes signifies "*foresaw*." Thus Abraham is said (John viii. 56) to have "*seen*," that is, to have "*foreseen*" the day of Christ. (See also John xviii. 4. Acts xx. 22. where the same word is used in the original.) We also know from the information of this Evangelist, (see John ii. 11.) that the way, in which our Lord during his publick ministry "*manifested forth his glory*," and induced "his disciples *to believe on him*," was by the *performance of miracles*. I conceive therefore, that every person, reading these observations of the Evangelist John without any previous bias to a mysterious and far-fetched interpretation of them, would understand the following to be the meaning of the last remark. "Isaiah, when he uttered the two foregoing prophecies, contemplated the future glory of Christ displayed in the performance of miracles, and spake of the dulness and obstinacy of the Jews in refusing to attend to these testimonials of his Divine authority."

How have the Trinitarians contrived to deduce an argument for the Divinity of Jesus from this plain declaration? Upon looking to the chapter, from which the latter of the two prophecies is quoted, (Isa. vi.) they discover that at the same time, when Isaiah was inspired with the foreknowledge of the rejection of our Saviour's miracles, he in vision "SAW *Jehovah of hosts*," and heard the seraphim crying, "*The whole earth is full of His* GLORY." Although these

coincidences are certainly a little remarkable, they afford not the shadow of a proof, that Jesus is Jehovah. Upon this patched-up argument however Mr. Wardlaw insists as if it was profane even to question its validity. See p. 76, 77, 134.

4. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Produced by Mr. Wardlaw, p. 77, 134.)

This prophecy was uttered by Jeremiah, when his countrymen were captives in Babylon, or scattered among other heathen nations. It evidently relates to their return from the captivity, and to their peaceable re-establishment in their own land. In verse 3. it is predicted that God would gather together the remains of the Jewish nation out of all the countries, into which they had been dispersed, and that he would bring them again to their own territory, where they would be fruitful and increase: in verse 4. that He would raise up for them overseers, both civil and religious, under whose superintendence they would be secure from those terrours, alarms, and distresses, with which they had been so long harassed. In verse 5. it is added that the LORD would raise up a successor to David, who would reign prosperously and execute justice "in the earth," or rather, "*in the land*," i. e. *in Judea*. "In his days," continues the Prophet, "Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely;" the meaning of which plainly is, that during the reign of this expected monarch the tribes of Judah and Benjamin would be safe from their present afflictions, and the kingdom of Israel, including the other ten tribes, would likewise be free from invasion and the devastations of war.

"And this is his name, whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." The sense of the original may, I apprehend, be more correctly represented thus; "And this is the name, whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH IS OUR PROSPERITY." According to the doctrine above stated, the application of this name to the predicted king only signified, *that during his reign Jehovah would signally bless his people with prosperity.*

If any reader prefers applying these words *to the Messiah*, the prophetical application to him of the name JEHOVAH IS OUR PROSPERITY, OR OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, must still be understood as signifying, that during his reign Jehovah would bestow abundant blessings upon mankind.

The same title is again employed in the 33d chapter, the whole strain of which shows, that the return of the Jews from captivity and their happy re-establishment in the land of Judea is the subject of the prophecy. The only material difference is, that in this instance (verse 16) the name JEHOVAH IS OUR PROSPERITY is given prophetically to *Jerusalem*, which shows the extreme fragility of the argument for the Deity of Christ founded upon the application of this title, whether it was really intended for him or not.

5. Zech. xiii. 7. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is *my fellow*, saith *Jehovah of hosts.*" (Produced, p. 72, 134.)

The word "*fellow*" signifies a person *associated* and *co-operating* with Jehovah in the superintendence of his people and the accomplishment of his purposes. To produce this passage as one in which "the name JEHOVAH is directly given to Jesus of Nazareth," proves nothing but the exigency of the case.

6. Zech. xi. 12, 13. "They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it

unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them." (Produced p. 77.)

M. Wardlaw gives no comment on these words: but I presume his argument would proceed upon the assumption, that the words, "*a goodly price that I was prized at of them*," are a part of the speech of Jehovah. That this assumption is erroneous appears from the beginning of the 12th verse, which Mr. Wardlaw has omitted. "And *I* (that is, the Prophet) said unto them, 'If ye think good, give me *my* price, (that is, the price of the Prophet,) and, if not, forbear.' So they weighed for my price (that is, as the price of the Prophet) thirty pieces of silver; and Jehovah said unto me, 'Cast it unto the potter;' a goodly price that I (the Prophet) was prized at of them."

7. Rom. xiv. 10, 11. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ:* for it is written, "As I live, saith the LORD, (that is, saith *Jehovah*, see Isa. xlv.) every knee shall bow *to me*, and every tongue shall confess *to God*." (Quoted p. 77, 134.)

These words exactly accord with the Unitarian doctrine, that "*God* shall judge the world in righteousness *through that man whom he hath ordained*." At the general judgment every one of us shall be rewarded or condemned *by Jehovah*. But, as it is necessary that some *visible and corporeal being* should act as mediator between the Omnipresent Spirit and mankind, *Christ* will occupy "the judgment seat," and declare, as the vicegerent of God, the innocence or the guilt, the reward or the punishment of those who appear before him.

8. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD." (Produced p. 77, 78, 134.)

That the title LORD is here equivalent to JEHOVAH, is evident from the passage of Isaiah alluded to by the Apostle. Isa. xlv. 25. The meaning evidently is, *that men should glory in God, by whom Christ has been made unto them Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption.*

These are all the examples which Mr. Wardlaw has collected of the application to Christ either of the title *Jehovah*, or of other titles equivalent to it. He however intimates, that these titles are given to our Saviour in a variety of less decisive passages, (p. 77, 135.) observing that, "If conviction be produced *by these instances*, such conviction will naturally lead to the application of the name to Jesus, *in many others, which may not at first view appear so obvious;*" to which remark I beg leave to append another, that, if these instances be utterly irrelevant, the many other proofs must be less than nothing and altogether vanity.

CHAPTER VI.

EXAMINATION OF THE PASSAGES, IN WHICH THE PECULIAR ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHRIST.

Mr. Wardlaw's Second head of "direct and immediate proofs" consists of those passages, in which he supposes the *peculiar attributes* of Deity to be ascribed to our Saviour. He "confines himself to the four following;" ETERNAL EXISTENCE, ALMIGHTY POWER, OMNIPRESENCE, and OMNISCIENCE.

I. Eternal existence.

1. John viii. 58. "Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.'" (Produced, p. 40, 79—84, 135.)

Mr. Wardlaw remarks concerning this passage, "Our Lord expressly affirms, that he existed before Abraham." The truth of his observation will be admitted probably by all Unitarians, who believe in the *pre-existence* of Christ. The attribute now in question is his *eternal* existence. That the words of Jesus are any evidence of this attribute, Mr. Wardlaw himself represents as dubious. After sounding his "shrill clarion" through three pages over the Socinian expositors, he observes, "The idea, which has often been suggested, *is far from being destitute of probability*, that there was in our Lord's words *an allusion*, perceived by the Jews, *and rendered*, PERHAPS, *emphatical by his manner*, to the words of God to Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM.'" p. 33. As our author here expresses himself with becoming hesitation and modesty, I only wonder that he has introduced this passage among "*the direct and immediate proofs*" of our Lord's Divinity.

2. Heb. i. 10. "And, 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth.'"

In the last Chapter, it was proved, that these words are not addressed to Christ. The author of the Epistle (ver. 8—12.) introduces two quotations from the Psalms, as referring to the authority of Jesus. The first describes the stability of his throne, and the equity of his government. The second represents the eternity and immutability of Jehovah, his God, as a pledge of the firm foundation of his kingdom.

3. Col. i. 17. "He is before all things." (Produced p. 84, 103, 138, 140.)

In the 15th verse of this Chapter, Christ is called "the first-born of every creature," which is a direct testimony, that he was not an eternal, but a created, being. Nor is this assertion contradicted by the phrase, "he is before all things." For, even if we suppose it to mean, not "he *is*," but "he *was* before all things," and if we were to grant that "*before* all things" signifies pre-existence *in time*, and not pre-eminence *in dignity*, still it could only signify, that he existed before all things except himself and God. It proves therefore, at the very utmost, nothing more than our Lord's existence before the creation of the universe.

4. Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."

I have formerly observed, (P. I. ch. 3. § 1.) that the true reading of this passage, (the reading found in Griesbach's text,) is as follows; "I am Alpha and Omega, *saith the Lord God*, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Since St. John attributes these words to *the Supreme God*, they cannot prove any thing respecting *Jesus Christ*.

Expressions of similar import with the title "*Alpha and Omega*" are applied to God in several parts of the prophecies of Isaiah, relating to the deliverance of the Jews from captivity through the instrumentality of Cyrus and the Persians. See Isa. xli. 4. xliii. 10. xliv. 6. xlviii. 12. These passages, as Le Clerc observes, are all intended to describe that superintending providence of God, which comprehends the past, the present, and the future. When the Almighty is said to be "the first and the last," the meaning of the expression is, that he is contemporary with the earliest and the latest events in that chain of causes and effects, by which he accomplishes his stupendous counsels. This remark is beautifully adapted to the series of occurrences referred to by the prophet Isaiah. It appears equally suitable at the commencement of a prophetical narration of the successes and calamities, which were appointed by the Almighty for the Christian church.

5. Rev. i. 17. "I am the first and the last." Rev. xxii. 13. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." (p. 41, 86. 136.)

The expressions contained in both these passages are the words of Christ. They ought to be interpreted in the sense, which we have just given to them when ascribed to the Supreme Being. They signify that Jesus Christ is contemporary with the earliest and the latest events in that dispensation, over which he has been ordained by the Almighty to preside, and that he is consequently qualified for all the honours, the exertions, and the duties of his august station. "They are not intended," as Mr. Belsham observes, "to express self-existence, but solely that the Christian dispensation was begun, and will be completed by Christ, who is the *author* and the *finisher* of our faith." Calm Inquiry, p. 269.

In both cases the application of the words "first and last" to our Lord, is so guarded as to exclude the idea of his Supreme Divinity. In the *first* chapter, after being described as "the first and the last," he is immediately stated to have died. This shows that he is not the Being, who alone hath immortality. Every person, upon reading carefully the *twenty-second* chapter, will perceive, that the speaker in ver. 13. ("I am Alpha and Omega," &c.) is the same, before whom John fell down to worship him, and who forbade him in these remarkable words; ver. 9. "See thou do it not; for I am a fellow-servant with thee, and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them who keep the sayings of this book; worship God."

6. Micah v. 2. "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (p. 86. 136.)

In the original the same word is used to denote his "*coming forth*" in the former part of the verse, and his "*going forth*" in the latter. It ought doubtless to be understood in both instances according to the same sense. In the former case it is commonly supposed to signify the *birth* of the Messiah; "Out of thee *shall he be born* unto me, who is to be a ruler in Israel." The last clause must therefore be understood thus; "*Whose birth* has been of old, from everlasting;" *that is*, "Whose birth has been determined, or appointed, from everlasting." Even though the expression "*goings forth*" should be referred to an earlier period of our Lord's existence than his birth from the virgin Mary, it must signify *generation* in some way or other, and therefore favours the Unitarian doctrine that he had a *beginning*, rather than the orthodox opinion of his eternity.

II. ALMIGHTY POWER.

1. "This Divine attribute," says Mr. Wardlaw, (p. 86.) "is plainly ascribed to Christ in a prophecy of Isaiah formerly quoted, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called—THE MIGHTY GOD.'" But the doctrine now to be proved is, not that our Saviour was MIGHTY, (for this is granted,) but that he was ALL-mighty, that his will was irresistible, and his power underived, independent, and unlimited.

In addition to the observations formerly offered upon this passage, I may here remark, that the epithet MIGHTY, upon which the argument depends, *is applied in more than a hundred passages of the Old Testament to mere human beings.* (See Taylor's Concordance, v. GEBER.)

2. Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, *saith the Lord God,*—THE ALMIGHTY."

If any credit is due to the assertion of the Sacred writer, these were the words of "*the Lord God,*" and not of *Jesus Christ.* As is generally agreed by the Christian Fathers of the four first centuries, the word (παντοκράτωρ) here translated *Almighty*, is the peculiar designation of the *Father.* It is no where in all the Scriptures given to Christ.

3. Phil. iii. 21. "We look for the Saviour from heaven, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, (the mighty energy,) whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (p. 87, 136.) "Such language," says Mr. Wardlaw, "cannot with propriety be used respecting any being, who is not possessed of omnipotence." The reader must make his choice between this unsupported assertion, and the declarations of Paul in other parts of his Epistles, that the same God, who raised Jesus from the dead, will also raise mankind *through the instrumentality of Jesus*, and that it is God who shall put all things under his feet." (2 Cor. iv. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 27.)

I have formerly observed, (P. II. ch. 7.) that the question respecting the power of Christ is, whether it belonged to him *originally by his own Divine nature*, or whether it was *conferred upon him* by a Superiour. By producing in order all the passages of the New Testament, which relate to the power of Christ, I proved the Unitarian doctrine, that it was *given*. Mr. Wardlaw has not even attempted to prove the contrary.

III. Omnipresence.

Mat. xviii. 20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." xxviii. 20. "And lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." (Produced by Mr. Wardlaw, p. 40, 87—90, 137.)

In treating of omnipresence as an attribute of *Christ*, Mr. Wardlaw seems to have forgotten, that he has no *distinct conception* of it as an attribute of *God*. (See above, P. I. ch. 4.) So far as can be inferred from his language, he believes only in the *virtual* omnipresence of *God*, or in his power of producing effects in every part of space. In the same sense I presume he understands the doctrine of the omnipresence of *Christ*. If so, he is not far from Scripture truth.

The words of Jesus, which have just been quoted, cannot properly be understood except as a promise, that wherever any of his disciples assembled to offer up their prayers to God, or in whatever part of the earth they were employed in the service of the gospel, Jesus would accomplish their requests, and supply them with all requisite encouragement and support. Thus understood, they are most suitable in each instance to the context.

Mat. xviii. 19. "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they

shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Having thus assured his disciples of the fulfilment of their united petitions to Heaven, our Lord assigns *a reason* why their requests would be granted; "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The connexion therefore, in which these words are introduced, shows, that he only intended to describe *his power of conferring the blessings* for which they prayed. But we know from the clear and copious Scripture testimonies, brought together in a former part of this Treatise, (P. II. ch. 7.) that Christ uniformly exercised his power in subjection to God, and that even in his present exalted state he only acts as a subordinate agent in accomplishing the decrees of the Almighty Father. Accordingly, in this very passage, he does not say, that he himself would by his own independent authority fulfil the prayers of his disciples: on the contrary, he affirms, "It shall be done for them *of my Father who is in heaven.*"

The similar declaration of Jehovah to Moses (Ex. xx. 24.) ought to be interpreted in the same manner. In this passage God first gives a *command* respecting the proper mode of offering prayer to him, and then subjoins a *promise* that, wherever such prayer should be offered, he would accomplish it: "In all places where I record my name, *I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.*" It is evident that this expression describes only a *virtual* omnipresence. A spirit, extended through all space, and present every moment in every part of it, cannot with any propriety be said to *come* to a person. The phrase is figurative. It represents the Almighty Father of the universe under the venerable and endearing image of a friend, whose ears are ever open to our petitions, and who flies with instant solicitude to the relief of those, who cry unto him for help.

The words, "Lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world," were addressed by Jesus to the eleven Apostles immediately before his ascension into heaven, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel among all nations. (See Mat. xxviii. 16—20.) The observation was intended as an assurance, that during their whole ministry Jesus would watch over them with a tender guardianship and affection, and that his care would extend to them in every place, preserving them from the dangers to which they would be exposed, and enabling them to exhibit the miracles by which the truth of their preaching would be irresistibly confirmed. This promise therefore, although very different in the mode of expression, is the same in substance with that recorded by the Evangelist Mark in the parallel passage: (Mark xvi. 17, 18.) "And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover;" after quoting which words the Evangelist remarks, (ver. 20.) that "they went forth and preached every where, *the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*" Thus was fulfilled the promise, recorded in different terms by both the Evangelists.*

The passages therefore, which, to bear upon the topick of Christ's Divinity, ought to prove his *actual omnipresence*, that is, the extension of his substance through every part of space, only prove, that he was *virtually present* with his disciples, to guard, comfort, and assist them in their apos-

* [Where is the difficulty of supposing the degree of power, necessary to the literal fulfilment of these promises, to be communicated? Nothing is proved for the Trinitarian hypothesis, until it be proved, that Jesus possessed in an *infinite* degree the *incommunicable* power of Jehovah. Editor.]

tolick labours. This virtual presence being merely the exercise of *power*, the consideration of it belongs to that head of inquiry.

John iii. 13. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." (Produced p. 90, 38.)

Notwithstanding Mr Wardlaw's positive assertion (p. 146.) that this text, as well as Rev. i. 8. and 1 John v. 20. is not "in the slightest degree touched by that high and vaunted authority," I can assure the reader, that the words "*who is in heaven*" are marked by Griesbach *doubtful*. The same uncertainty must cleave to every argument founded upon them; and this uncertainty is multiplied into itself by the doubts and varieties of interpretation, which are found among orthodox Commentators, even on the supposition that the words are genuine. Some of the most eminent *Trinitarian* criticks, (R. Stephens, Vatable, and Raphel,) have supposed them to signify only, "No man is acquainted with the counsels of God so fully as I am."*

IV. Omniscience.

1. Rev. ii. 23. "I (*Jesus*) am he who searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Produced, p. 40, 90, 91, 137.)

The latter clause so far explains the former as to prove, that it alludes to the office of Jesus Christ as the Judge of men. In order that he may be qualified "to give unto every man according to his works," it is evidently necessary, that he should know the thoughts and dispositions of their hearts. The question between those who assert and those who deny his Supreme Divinity is, Whether he possesses this knowledge of himself, or whether it is imparted to him by a supe-

* [The literal acceptation of the phrase may prove the pre-existence of Jesus, but can prove nothing more. Editor.]

riour. The question is determined by those numerous and positive declarations of Scripture formerly brought forward, (P. II. ch. 6, 7.) which prove that he was instructed by the Father, that he is ordained, authorized, and qualified by the Supreme God to execute the office of universal judge. Of these passages there is one especially decisive; (Rom. ii. 16.) "*God shall judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ.*" To this evidence Mr. Wardlaw chiefly opposes bold assertion.—"The evidence on this particular may be brought within very short compass; for it is irresistibly conclusive." "Is there any need of further witness? If this be not a direct and unqualified claim of a peculiar Divine prerogative, there is no meaning in human language, and to 'search the Scriptures' for clear and satisfactory knowledge must be a vain and fruitless task."—But he also insists upon the expression "*I am he that searcheth*" as more expressive than the simpler phrase "I search." His argument proceeds from inattention to the following circumstances. The want of the present tense in Hebrew verbs is supplied by the participle, following the pronoun, agreeing with it in number and person, and having sometimes the definite article prefixed. From the Hebrew this construction has been transferred into the Greek of the Septuagint and of the New Testament. For example; the expression, "*I am he that came* (it should be, *cometh*) out of the army," (Εγω ειμι ὁ ηκων εκ της παρεμβολης, 1 Sam. iv. 16.) means only, "*I come* out of the army." In like manner "*I am he that searcheth*" (Εγω ειμι ὁ ερευνων) signifies nothing more than "I search." (Εγω ερευνω.) This form of expression is what criticks call *a Hebraism*, and "no book in the whole New Testament has so many Hebraisms as the Apocalypse." (Marsh's Michaelis, ch. xxxiii. § 6.) It would in my opinion have been better if the authors of the common translation, like the editors of the Improved Version, had accommodated the words

of Jesus to the idiom of the English language. This would have prevented Mr. Wardlaw's remark, that the terms ascribed to our Lord, "evidently proceed upon the express assumption, that this is the exclusive prerogative of *one being* only."

It may also be observed in reply to Mr. Wardlaw's arguments from this passage, that, although Solomon *at the dedication of the temple* (1 Kings viii. 39.) addressed Jehovah as *alone* acquainted with the hearts of men, this does not contradict the supposition, that in consequence of the all-wise procedures of the Deity subsequent to that period, Christ will *at the day of general judgment* be endued with all the knowledge of men's thoughts and dispositions, which is necessary to the discharge of his office.

2. John ii. 24, 25. "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." (p. 40, 91, 137.)

A profound and intimate knowledge of human nature was absolutely requisite to the character of Christ as a moral and religious instructer. In this knowledge he was transcendently eminent. According to his own account it was imparted to him by the Father. (P. II. ch. 6.) Mr. Wardlaw has not attempted to prove the contrary. The Unitarian doctrine upon this subject stands hitherto unassailed. In addition to the decisive proofs formerly brought forward I now add, that the woman of Samaria (John iv. 17—19) instead of inferring from our Saviour's supernatural knowledge of her condition and behaviour, that he was the omniscient God, appears only to have concluded, that he was inspired with this knowledge by the Almighty: "Sir," said she, "I perceive that thou art a prophet."

3. John xxi. 17. "Lord, thou knowest all things." (p. 91, 137.)

The force of this proof is entirely destroyed by the application of the very same language to Christians in general by the author of this Gospel. 1 John ii. 20. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and *ye know all things*." The knowledge here attributed to Christians is represented as arising from their *unction*, or *inspiration*, by the Almighty. Why might not the knowledge of our Saviour arise from the same cause? In each case *the knowledge of all things* means only *a very extensive and various knowledge*. For the word "*All*," as every attentive student of the Scriptures knows, is in numerous instances used to signify *a very great number and variety*. (See Schleusner, v. Πας.)

Mr. Wardlaw, towards the conclusion of his Discourse on the Titles and Attributes of Christ, introduces the following observations; "With regard to all those texts, which have been quoted, no attempt is made to prove, that upon the ordinary principles of construction they are *unfairly* or *unnaturally* rendered." "In those, of which a different translation is proposed, it is not pretended that the new rendering is more consistent with the rules of syntax, or the ordinary usage of the original language, than the old; but only that the words are *capable of bearing it*,—that it is *possible* for them to be so translated."—If the cause of orthodoxy requires to be supported by such assertions as these, no honest man will engage in its defence. I unfeignedly hope, that Mr. Wardlaw did not consider what he was saying: indeed I believe, that he could not. It is my deliberate opinion, (and all Unitarians, who think themselves capable of understanding the original, will probably agree with me,) that, in the very few instances, in which we depart from the common translation, we think our versions at least equally fair, natural, and obvious with those of Trinitarians. Our translations, we conceive, express the sense,

in which the words of the sacred authors would be immediately understood by those, who lived in their age, who used their language, and were familiar with their manners, habits, and sentiments. Since we find the doctrines of the strict Unity of God, the inferiority of Jesus Christ, and the derivation of his knowledge and power, clearly asserted in many hundred passages of Scripture ; and since we think the doctrines of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ, as now held by the orthodox, both absurd in themselves and contrary to the general tenour and plain language of the Bible, we should be justified in rendering four or five difficult passages in any *allowable* manner, which made them consistent with our primary and indisputable principles. The fact however is, that we are not reduced to this necessity.

CHAPTER VII.

EXAMINATION OF THE PASSAGES, IN WHICH THE PECULIAR WORKS OF DEITY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHRIST.

Mr. Wardlaw (p. 95) "affirms, in the 3d place, that WORKS are ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, to which no being is competent but the Supreme God."

I. First, the MIRACLES of Jesus are produced as evidences of his Divinity. Mr. Wardlaw allows, that the miracles themselves are no proof of this doctrine, since "similar wonders were wrought by the Prophets before and by the Apostles after him." But he contends, (p. 96—98, 139.) that *the peculiar manner*, in which our Lord performed some of his miracles, "cannot be vindicated from the charge of *presumptuous impiety*, except by supposing that he possessed *in himself* the power necessary to their accomplishment."

Thus, it is related, (Mat. viii. 26.) that, when a storm had arisen on the lake of Tiberias, "He arose and rebuked the winds, and said unto the sea, 'Peace, be still!' and immediately there was a great calm." These words remind us of that Being, of whom it is said in the sublime language of the Psalmist, (Ps. lxv. 7.) "He stilleth the noise of the seas and the noise of their waves, and the tumults of the people." But it would have been presumptuous impiety in Jesus, if he were a *created* being, to employ expressions, which could lead his fellow-creatures to imagine even for an instant, that he claimed equality with God. THEREFORE, he was the uncreated Jehovah, the Supreme Lord of universal nature.

Again, we are informed (Mat. viii. 2, 3.) that "there came a leper to Jesus, doing him obeisance, and saying,

'Sir, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.'" The Apostles, on occasions partly similar, (Acts iii. 12. xiv. 15.) disclaimed the possession of inherent and Divine power; and Moses and Aaron were punished with exclusion from the land of promise, because they performed a miracle "with inconsiderate passion, as if the power had resided *in themselves*." In this instance however, although Jesus would have abhorred to say or do any thing, which could possibly be interpreted as a false comparison of himself with the Almighty, he is simply stated to have replied, "I will; be thou clean:" and immediately the leprosy was cleansed. THEREFORE, *Jesus "possessed in himself underived and independent power."*

The arguments, which I have here presented in a condensed form, appear to me the most ingenious and eloquent pieces of reasoning in Mr. Wardlaw's volume. But deplorable is the condition of that tottering system, whose advocates, instead of relying upon plain and positive declarations of Scripture, are obliged to prop it up by far-fetched inferences, and by imaginary hints and allusions; and it is curious and entertaining to observe, how Reason, which is discarded and turned out of doors, whenever her evidence is unfavourable to the popular system, is called up again to the tribunal and treated with all possible respect, when it is conceived that she can serve the cause of orthodoxy even by suggesting the most faint and distant analogies.

I might bid adieu to this argument without any further observations. But the charge of "presumptuous impiety" has been brought against the holy and humble Jesus; he is said to have claimed for himself as his original possession an unlimited control over the material and moral world. Let the reader call to mind those solemn, explicit, and often repeated declarations, which were formerly brought

forward, (P. II. ch. 7. § 2,) and by which our Lord absolutely disclaimed the possession of inherent power, saying that *of himself* he could do nothing, and that *the Father*, dwelling in him, did the works. I confess, that his express assertions, when put into the balance with the eloquent and ingenious pleadings of one, whose talents and virtues I highly esteem, weigh more in my mind than the waters of the ocean, when placed in comparison with the drop that hangs upon the bucket.

I have formerly shown, that it was our Lord's usual practice before performing a miracle to offer up a prayer to his heavenly Father, and that God always granted his petition by performing the miracle through him. Thus we see the true difference between his mode of exhibiting miracles and the conduct of Moses and Aaron, who instead of expressing by a humble and pious behaviour their sense of dependence upon the Almighty for the power which they exerted, gave way, as Mr. Wardlaw properly expresses himself, to "inconsiderate passion," and cried out with emotions of pride and anger, "Hear now, ye rebels! must we fetch you water out of this rock?" We have also seen, that, although the worshippers of Jupiter and Mercury at Lystra were induced by the miracle performed by Paul and Barnabas to believe that the gods had come down to them in the likeness of men, and thus occasioned a necessity that the Apostles should correct their gross delusion by crying out, "We also are men of like passions with you;" yet no such inference was ever drawn by the better informed spectators in Judea and Galilee, before whom *Jesus* displayed his miraculous powers, and he consequently was never called upon to guard them against the reception of that heathenish sentiment.

II. Lest any readers should not be "fully convinced" by Mr. Wardlaw's reasonings upon the miracles, he proceeds to show, "that THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS is

one of the Works, ascribed in the Scriptures to Jesus Christ." (p. 98—109, 138.)

The question to be determined is, Whether, supposing that our Saviour created the material universe, he accomplished this undertaking by his own inherent, underived, and unaided omnipotence, or whether he was employed and empowered to fulfil the counsels of a Superiour. Mr. Wardlaw affirms, (p. 106.) that "the Scriptures give no countenance to the idea of his executing this work as a subordinate agent, a mere instrument, inferiour to Jehovah." I have shown, (P. II. ch. 7. § 1.) that this idea is expressed in every passage, which can possibly be interpreted as attributing the work of creation to Jesus. Three of these passages, (John i. 3, 10. Col. i. 16, 17.) together with the words quoted in Heb. i. 10. as *referring* to the government of Christ, though *addressed* to Jehovah, form the groundwork of such severe and triumphant criticisms, extending through ten pages, as will make the hapless Unitarians smart so long as Mr. Wardlaw's critical celebrity shall endure.

3. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD and THE FINAL JUDGMENT are works ascribed to Jesus Christ in numerous passages of the New Testament. Mr. Wardlaw contends, that they cannot be performed by him, unless he be the Omnipotent and Omniscient God. (p. 107—113, 138, 413, 415.)

Before he proceeds to adduce his reasonings in support of this doctrine, he gives his readers to understand, that Unitarians, or as he calls them, "the opposers of our Lord's Divinity," set aside all those passages of Scripture, which ascribe dominion and judgment to Jesus Christ, doubting or denying, that he is appointed to execute these offices at all. In order to convey this impression he makes several quotations from the writings of Mr. Belsham. When he extract-

ed these quotations, he could scarcely avoid observing, that Mr. Belsham only represents the ideas expressed in them as *deserving of consideration, peculiar to himself*, or *confined to a few Unitarians only*: (See Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 313—345.) and he must know, that Unitarians in general consider the doctrine of the final judgment of mankind through Jesus Christ as one of the most prominent articles of the Christian revelation, by a regard to which their lives ought to be daily regulated. I trust all candid inquirers will be advised not to take their opinions of Unitarianism from the representations of its enemies.

In a former part of this Treatise, (P. II. ch. 7. § 3.) I have stated and defended the Unitarian doctrine concerning the judgment of mankind through Jesus Christ, which is, that he is empowered and ordained to execute these exalted offices by the one true God. He himself asserted, that "*the Father gave him authority to execute judgment*," and various explicit declarations of Scripture agree with the doctrine of Paul, that he is "*ordained by God* to be the judge of quick and dead." These clear assertions we believe; they are not the deductions of human reason; they are authoritatively taught to mankind in the Scriptures of truth; Mr. Wardlaw does not call them in question. He nevertheless maintains, that our Lord is not competent to discharge the office of universal judge, unless he be perfect God as well as perfect man. But he does not pretend that this doctrine, like that of the *delegated* authority of Jesus, is expressly taught in the Scriptures. He only insists, that it may be proved *by a train of reasoning*. Leaving the Scriptures, he endeavours to establish it by the following *argument*. The qualifications essential to the being, who governs and who is to judge the world, are *Omniscience*, *Omnipotence*, and *Independence*. But these qualifications cannot be conferred, and belong only to God. Since there-

fore Jesus Christ governs and is to judge the world, it follows that he is the Supreme God.

This argument relates to a subject, the most sublime and awful, and far removed from our knowledge and experience. I fear therefore to maintain my side of the question in the same dogmatical terms, in which Mr. Wardlaw maintains his. But, with a conviction that the Scriptures alone can afford us information upon this subject, and with great reluctance to *argue* the point at all upon the grounds of mere human reason, I shall venture to say, that the qualifications of Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Independence, do not appear to me essential to the office of the delegated governour and judge of mankind. I do not see any reason, why the *power* of such a personage should extend beyond the world over which he presides, or why his *knowledge* should comprehend the actions, characters, and deserts, not only of those who come before his tribunal, but of all intelligent beings, who have existed in other regions of space and in other periods of eternity. So far as I can judge, the power and knowledge of such an exalted person may rationally be supposed to be not only *limited*, but also *derived and dependent*. It is only requisite that he possess the knowledge and power essential to the execution of his office ; *how* he possesses them, whether by his own nature or by derivation from the Almighty and Omniscient God, appears to be of no moment. I conceive therefore that no valid objection can be brought, from the improbability of the doctrine in the view of *unprejudiced reason*, against the plain and obvious sense of those passages of Scripture, which describe the offices of Christ in his exalted state, and represent him as discharging them in subordination to God the Father.

In his Discourse on this subject Mr. Wardlaw asserts, that the necessity of Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Independence, in the delegated judge of mankind is so obvious,

that it would be a waste of time to prove it, and that he must be sadly pressed by his system, who can feel a moment's hesitation in acknowledging it. In a note however (Note G, p. 413.) he states the following reasons, why it is requisite that the delegated judge of mankind, as well as the Being who confers upon him his commission and authority, should be in his own nature nothing inferiour to the Supreme God : "Divest the judge of his *Divine* Majesty; and you render it impossible to feel, in anticipating our appearance before him, that trembling awe which the thought of the future judgment ought always to inspire. We do not feel as if satisfied with his decisions. The necessity of instant unquestioning submission, under which the mind sinks in the contemplation of a *Divine* Judge, ceases to impress it. We begin immediately to think of possible errours, and of appeal to higher authority."—To my mind nothing can be more shocking than these expressions. For who, but the most proud, profane, and hardened wretch can imagine his appearance before the judgment-seat of Christ without a trembling awe, and "begin immediately to think of possible errours and of appeal to higher authority ?" I have so good an opinion of the author of these dreadful, and I trust, *hasty* sentences as to believe, that, if it shall please God to spare his useful life, and to relieve his mind from that heavy load of prejudice under which it labours, he will tremble even at the idea of having employed such language, and will submit to have his actions tried and his destiny pronounced by any being, whom God shall have appointed to be his judge.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXAMINATION OF THE PASSAGES IN WHICH SUPREME WORSHIP IS SUPPOSED TO BE GIVEN TO CHRIST.

Mr. Wardlaw's fourth general head of arguments for the Divinity of Christ consists of those, by which he endeavours to prove, that our Saviour is "represented in Scripture as the proper object of that WORSHIP, which cannot without impious idolatry be addressed to any other being than the Supreme God."

I. In the first place, he argues from the worship or obeisance offered to Christ during his publick ministry upon our earth. But, with great propriety, he omits noticing the instances of this obeisance *particularly*, because in the greater number of them "the *kind and degree* of intended homage cannot with certainty be ascertained." He therefore only offers the following *general* remark. "In some of these instances, as must strike every reader of the Gospel history, there is so striking a resemblance, so very near an approach to Divine worship, that we should have expected a creature actuated by such principles as were formerly described, tenderly alive to a sense of his infinite inferiority, and jealous of the glory of the God that sent him, to have said, on such occasions, as the Apostle Peter did to Cornelius—'Stand up: I myself also am a man;' or as the angel to John, when he fell at his feet to worship him;—'See thou do it not—worship God.'" (p. 113, 139, 140.)

The observations, which I submit to the candid reader in reply, are these.

1. We know, that it was the constant practice of our Lord, when the admiration of the multitude was excited by

his discourses or his miracles, to raise their minds from himself to God, representing the Father as the original fountain of his wisdom and authority, and therefore the only proper object of their supreme gratitude and veneration. We know, that in various instances the spectators did entertain these just sentiments, *glorifying God for having given such power to Jesus*. We also know, that, whenever our Lord claimed or encouraged honour towards himself, he represented it as due to him *only as the ambassador of the Supreme God*, saying that "all men should honour the Son, *as* (that is, *because*) they honour the Father; *for he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him*." We do not know, that homage was ever offered to him without a higher reference to God, and that he accepted it without a hint of its impropriety.

2. It appears to me, that *the angel*, whose conduct Mr. Wardlaw contrasts with that of Jesus, *was Jesus himself*. I shall explain my reasons for this opinion by producing all the passages of the Apocalypse, which make mention of this angel, adding such brief observations as appear suitable to confirm the proposed view of the subject.

Rev. i. 1, 2. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his Angel (*Jesus*) unto his servant John; who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."—Here observe, First, that the words, "*he sent and signified*" appear in the original at least, if not in this translation, to refer to *God* rather than to Jesus; 2dly, that the term "*angel*" or "*messenger*" is applied in Scripture to any being, who acts as the medium of communication between God and mankind; 3dly, that John is said in the second verse to bear record "of the testimony of *Jesus Christ*," and not of an angel interme-

diate between Jesus Christ and himself. Accordingly we find from what follows, that Jesus Christ delivered this testimony to John in his own person. See the ninth and following verses, and the second and third Chapters.

The same Angel is probably represented as speaking to John in the following passages; ch. iv. 1. x. 4. 8, 11. xi. 1, 2, 3. xii. 10, 11, 12. These passages however contain nothing, which tends to determine the question, whether the Angel was Jesus Christ or an intermediate being between him and John. The next passage is somewhat clearer. Ch. xiv. 13, 14. John hears a voice speaking to him from heaven; he looks, and sees in the heavens a white cloud, upon which "*one sits like unto the son of man.*" This seems to imply, that the being whose voice he heard was the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. All reasonable hesitation is however removed by the two remaining passages, which relate to the intercourse between this Angel and John. Ch. xix. 9, 10. "*And he saith unto me,* 'Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the lamb.' *And he saith unto me,* 'These are the true sayings of God:' and I fell at his feet to worship him. *And he said unto me,* 'See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God;' for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. xxii. 1—5. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal," &c. Ver. 6—17. "*And he said unto me,* 'These sayings are faithful and true;' and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done: behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.' And I John saw these things and heard them. And, when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

Then saith he unto me, 'See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.' *And he saith unto me,* 'Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city: for without are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.'" Here we may remark, 1st; These passages, (Rev. xix. 9, 10. and Rev. xxii. 1—16.) are so similar, that the latter, which is the more full and clear of the two, may properly be used as an explanation of the former; 2dly, The addresses of the Angel, who gave the revelation to John, are, in various parts of the book, introduced with this formula, "*He saith* (or, *said*) *unto me,*" and, in the two passages just quoted, this formula appears throughout to refer to the same person as the speaker; 3dly, If the same person be the speaker throughout, various expressions in the *latter* passage prove him to be *Jesus Christ*, such as, "*Behold, I come quickly,*" "*My reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be,*" "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last,*" "I Jesus *have sent mine angel* (John) *to testify unto you these things in the churches;*" 4thly, In the 6th

verse of the 22d chapter, the speaker says to John, "*The Lord God of the Holy prophets sent his angel*, (I would interpret it, "The Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent *me*, his angel,) *to show unto his servants the things that must shortly be done ;*" by supposing the speaker to be *Jesus Christ*, we perceive a close resemblance between this passage and the words, with which the book opens, "the revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass ;*" 5thly, The reply delivered in each instance to John, when he fell down to worship, is wrongly translated in the common version; the true sense of these passages, as given by Doddridge and others, is as follows ; ch. xix. 10. "And I fell before his feet to worship him : but he saith unto me, 'See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant (of God) with thee, and with thy brethren who have (that gift of prophecy which is) the testimony to Jesus : worship God.' For the testimony to Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Ch. xxii. 9. "And he saith unto me, 'See thou do it not ; I am a fellow servant (of God) with thee, and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them, who keep the sayings of this book : worship God.' "

Such are the reasons, which induce me to believe, that there was no intermediate angel between our Saviour and John, but that Jesus Christ himself delivered the revelation to the writer of the book. The supposition of an *intermediate* angel is not only gratuitous and destitute of all foundation, but is allowed to be encumbered with great difficulties. The other supposition reduces the whole book to greater clearness and consistency, and, I doubt not, would have occurred to all readers as the obvious and indisputable meaning of the writer, if it had not afforded strong evidence against the popular doctrine of the Divinity of Christ.

II. The second proof, produced by Mr. Wardlaw, that our Lord accepted without a hint of its impropriety the homage due only to God, is the exclamation of Thomas, "My lord and my god!"

I have formerly observed, that this exclamation of astonishment and delight includes a confession on the part of Thomas, that Jesus was his master and his inspired instructer in religion and virtue. Although therefore the mode of expression was strong in proportion to the strength of the Apostle's feelings, it did not exceed the truth, and the reply of Jesus was perfectly proper, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed."

III. In the third place, Mr. Wardlaw produces (p. 116, 117, 118, 140.) a class of passages, which, in the common translation of the Bible, contain the phrase, "*calling on the name of the Lord*," or "*of Christ*."

From our author's confident language it is evident, that he saw through this subject in an instant by a glance of inspiration. I am less highly favoured. I have spent a whole day in examining all the passages, where the word (επικαλεομαι) translated "*to call upon*" occurs, carefully comparing the Hebrew, the Greek, and the English. In the evening I rest from my labour with a persuasion, that much may be said on each side of the question, and, instead of being able to form a very decided opinion, I am inclined to consider this as one of the difficulties left in revelation for the purpose of inculcating humility and candour.

The passages, brought forward by Mr. Wardlaw, are as follows.

Acts ii. 21. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved." Rom. x. 11, 12, 13. "For the Scriptures saith, 'Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.' For there

is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same LORD OVER ALL is rich unto all *that call upon him*; for, '*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the* LORD *shall be saved.*'" The last words are quoted from the prophecy of Joel, (ch. ii. 32.) They signify, that every one, who in a season of distress called upon God for assistance, would be delivered from danger and affliction. The occurrence of the word *Jehovah* in the original Hebrew proves, that He is the being here intended; nor does *the train of St. Paul's reasoning* afford any ground to believe, that he makes mention of the worship of *Christ*. The sentiment, which he expresses, is evidently this; that "God, who is no respecter of persons, but who accepts the sincere endeavours of all in every nation who fear and obey him, makes no difference between the Jew and the Gentile merely on account of their extraction, but is rich in mercy and beneficence to all in every part of his creation, who cry unto him for help."

The remaining passages of this class refer not to Jehovah, but to *Christ*.

Acts ix. 14. "And here he hath authority from the chief-priests to bind all *that call on thy name*." Ver. 21. "Is not this he that destroyed them, *which called on this name* in Jerusalem." xxii. 16. "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord*." 1 Cor. i. 2. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*."

It is not disputed, that these passages may be so translated without any offence against critical propriety. But it is also certain, that the original words may equally well, as far as respects *grammar*, be translated thus; "And here he hath authority from the chief-priests to bind all,

that are called by thy name:" "Is not this he that destroyed them, *who are called by this name* in Jerusalem?" "Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, *taking upon thyself his name:*" "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints, *with all that in every place are called by the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

When I laid down the general principles to be followed in investigating the sense of the Scriptures, I observed, that, if a passage of the New Testament admits of being translated in two different ways, the student ought to desist from making a choice between them, until the doctrine of Scripture is ascertained by other unambiguous expressions. This maxim applies to the class of passages under consideration. He, who is convinced upon other grounds, that supplication to Christ was *the common practice* of the primitive believers, is justified in adopting the translation of these passages, which is accommodated to that supposition. On the other hand, he who finds no certain evidence of the prevalence of prayer to Christ among the first disciples, is right in adopting that translation, which gives consistency to the sense of Scripture.

At the end of the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, (a work of almost apostolick authority,) this designation is employed in circumstances, which seem to determine its exact meaning. "May the God, who surveys all things, the sovereign of spirits and the Lord of all flesh, who hath chosen the Lord Jesus Christ and us through him to be a peculiar people, *give to every soul, who is called by his glorious and holy name,** faith, fear, peace, patience, forbearance, temperance, chasteness, and prudence, so as to

* Δωη πασῃ ψυχῃ επικεκλημενῃ το μεγαλοπρεπες και αγιον ονομα αυτου. The use of επικεκλημενῃ, in the passive voice, instead of επικαλουμενῃ, which may be either the passive or the middle, determines the sense.

be well-pleasing to his name, through our high-priest and advocate Jesus Christ, through whom to Him be glory and majesty, might and honour both now and for ever. Amen." We know therefore, that "*to be called by the name of Christ*" was a designation employed in the apostolick age to denote *the profession of the Christian religion*. We do not know, until it be proved, that the primitive believers invoked Christ in prayer, or *called upon his name*. The former interpretation therefore is certainly agreeable to fact; the latter may be conducive to errour.

To be called by the name of a person is a phrase of very frequent occurrence in the Sacred Scriptures. It signifies *to belong to that person*. Deut. xxviii. 10. Moses, having promised to the children of Israel the blessing of God upon their obedience, adds, "And all people of the earth shall see, *that thou art called by the name of Jehovah*, and they shall be afraid of thee." The descendants of Abraham are said *to be called by the name of Jehovah* in several other passages; (2 Chron. vii. 14. Isa. xliii. 7. Jer. xiv. 9. xv. 16. Dan. ix. 19.) the expression signifies, *that they belonged to Jehovah* as his worshippers and the objects of his protection and favour. In like manner, the temple at Jerusalem, (1 Kings viii. 43. Jer. vii. 10, 11, 14, 30. xxxii. 34. xxxiv. 15.) the city of Jerusalem itself, (Dan. ix. 18, 19.) the ark of the covenant, (2 Sam. vi. 2.) and the converted heathens, (Amos ix. 12. Acts xv. 17.) are said "*to be called by the name of Jehovah*." The expression signifies only, *that they were his*. Thus also, *to be called by the name of Christ* was the same thing as *to belong to Christ, to be his disciples, to profess his religion*. Hence in the Epistle of James we find the phrase employed in a manner, which is free from all ambiguity; ch. ii. 6, 7. "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme *that worthy*

name, by the which ye are called?" Although, in these examples, the form of expression in the Greek is different, the sense appears to be the same as in the passages, which I am now endeavouring to illustrate. *Being called by the name of Christ* signified the same thing as *professing the religion of Christ*, and hence became a common designation of the primitive believers.

IV. Mr. Wardlaw next produces two passages from the Epistles of Paul, in which "Jesus is acknowledged in connexion with God the Father as ordering the events of providence."

1 Thess. iii. 11, 12, 13. "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you: and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." (p. 40, 119, 140.)

2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. "And now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." (p. 40, 119, 120, 140.)

In these passages, Jesus Christ is represented as co-operating with the Father in aiding, directing, consoling, and edifying his disciples. Other scriptures attribute to him the same offices. But it is clearly stated in many parts of the New-Testament, that our Lord discharges these offices in subordination to the Father, and by means of power and knowledge communicated from him. In conformity with these statements we ought to understand the passages before us, which do not contain an "*invocation*" either of God or of Jesus, but *a devout wish* of aid and direction

from them; and which guard against the supposition of their equality by giving to one of them only that title, which belongs to the Supreme Deity alone, GOD THE FATHER.

Mr. Wardlaw is, as usual, very unfortunate in his minuter criticisms. He observes, with respect to the former of the two passages, that "*the Lord*," in the 12th verse, is evidently *the Lord Jesus Christ*. Griesbach however has marked this word *doubtful*. If it be omitted, the passage will read thus; "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you, and make you to increase and abound in love one toward another," &c. The various examples of inattention to the correctness of the Greek text, which I have observed, constrain me to think, that Mr. Wardlaw has made his bold assertions (p. 140.) concerning Griesbach's emendations without taking the trouble to examine whether they were true or false.

With respect to the *second* of these passages, Mr. Wardlaw endeavours to confirm his argument by remarking, that Christ is "not only associated with God, but in the order of address *put before him*." He makes the same observation upon another passage, (2 Cor. xiii. 14. p. 19.) where also Christ is mentioned in the order of the sentence before God. This argument at the utmost rests on very dubious ground. It is the idiom of the *English* language, when a verb has more than one nominative, to place that first, which is considered the highest in dignity and eminence. In *Latin* the rule is the reverse; the most important object being mentioned *last*. Whether there be any established practice upon this subject in *Greek*, I must confess myself at present unable to say; but I do not take Mr Wardlaw's rule upon trust. Besides, I cannot see how this observation is applicable to prove the Trinitarian doctrine. For, although it cannot be denied, that Christ is often put before God the Father in the *affections* of his worshippers,

I never knew, that his superiority to the Father was a doc trine taught *by systematick theologians*. Perhaps the true cause, why the name of God *follows* that of Christ in this benediction, is, that a considerable train of words is connected with it by the relative pronoun.

V. Mr. Wardlaw (p. 120.) further argues for the Divinity of Christ from "*the forms of benediction*, with which the Epistles generally open or conclude, and which cannot be viewed in any other light than as brief prayers for the Divine blessing on the churches and individuals to whom they are addressed."

From this view of the apostolick benedictions I am not disposed to dissent. Properly speaking, they imply only benevolent *wishes* for happiness, mutual love, and all temporal and spiritual blessings, to be bestowed by God and Jesus upon the persons addressed. But, as almost every wish of an habitually pious man includes a prayer, they may also be considered as aspirations of the mind to God, who is the object of prayer. It is to be observed however, (see above, P. II. ch. 4.) that, in every instance of such benedictions, a marked distinction is made between "*God the Father*," who is the only True God, and "*the Lord Jesus Christ*," who, according to the doctrine stated in other parts of Scripture, exercises his functions, as the guardian and benefactor of the Christian church, in subjection to God and by means of qualifications imparted from him.

VI. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. "For this thing *I besought the Lord* thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of *Christ* may rest upon me." (p. 40, 119, 120, 140.)

Several of the most eminent Trinitarians both in ancient and modern times have supposed, that Paul intended by "*the Lord*" to signify *God the Father*. With due deference to their judgment, the mention of *Christ* in the latter part of the passage seems to me to indicate, that he was the person, whom Paul "besought." If so, we have a clear instance of an earnest supplication for aid, addressed to Jesus. It is to be observed however, that, when addressed, he makes a reply in distinct terms, saying to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This renders it probable, that, when Paul besought him, he was present with the Apostle either in vision or personally.

VII. Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon (Jesus) and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;' and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'" (p. 41, 120—120, 143.)

From the 55th verse we learn, that Jesus had shortly before appeared to this holy martyr in vision, and hence it is probable, that a vivid impression remained upon his mind, which prompted these affecting ejaculations. In the only two instances therefore of the invocation of Jesus, which we find in the New Testament, we have considerable reason to believe, that the petitioners were in peculiar circumstances, which authorized and excited their supplications. If this were *certain*, we might reply without hesitation, that the examples of Paul and Stephen do not justify prayer to Christ in those, to whom no such appearance is presented.

The view of the nature of Christ, conceived by Stephen when he invoked him, may be inferred from the vision, exhibited for his support and consolation. See ver. 55. He called upon Jesus, not *as God*, but *as standing at the right hand of God*, that is, appointed and empowered by God to

direct the affairs of his church, and to guard the lives and preserve the souls of his servants. The example therefore of this dying martyr, even if it authorize us to *pray* to Christ, affords no proof of his *Supreme Divinity.*

With respect to the second ejaculation, "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,*" it was probably addressed to God, the Judge of all, to whom the expiring saint appears previously and deliberately to have diverted his attention in the solemn act of *kneeling down.*

I confess however, that I am not able, completely to my own satisfaction, to reconcile these two instances of the invocation of Jesus with those numerous and clear directions,* which represent *the Father* as the only proper object of religious adoration. But I humbly trust, that, if from this, and every other difficulty, which occurs to me in the study of Divine revelation, I learn *modesty and charity;* if I am careful to comply with those explicit and often-repeated injunctions, which command the worship of THE FATHER in spirit and in truth; if I regard with due reverence and admiration the character, the doctrines, and the precepts of Jesus Christ, and endeavour to testify my love to him *by keeping his commandments;* though men may condemn me, he will approve: and, if any one should harshly reply, that I must dispel my doubts, and not pretend that upon such a subject the Bible contains any difficulties, I answer in the words of a venerable Prelate, to whom the publick is under great obligations both as a defender of truth, and much more as an example of candour and Christian moderation; "If different men, in carefully and conscientiously examining the Scriptures, should arrive at different conclusions, even on points of the last importance; we trust that God, who alone

* Such as, John xv. 16. xvi. 23. Rom. i. 8. vii. 25. xv. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 57. Eph. iii. 14—21. v. 20. Phil. iii. 3. Col. i. 3, 12. ii. 17. Heb. xiii. 15. 1 Peter i. 17. iv. 11.

knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in errour. We trust that he will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in an errour, because he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an Idolater, of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worshipper of Jesus Christ be in an errour, we trust that God will pardon his mistake, because he has fallen into it from a dread of disobeying what he conceives to be *revealed* concerning the *nature* of the Son, or *commanded* concerning the *honour* to be given him. Both are actuated by the same principle—THE FEAR OF GOD; and, though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope and belief, that, if they add to their faith charity, they will meet in heaven."—Bp. WATSON'S THEOLOGICAL TRACTS, Preface, p. xvii, xviii.

VIII. Heb. i. 6. "And let all the angels of God worship him." (p. 127.)

It is well known, that the word translated "*worship*" denoted only that obeisance, which was offered to superiours as a mark of profound respect; and that the term "*angel*" is applied to any being, who was employed to communicate the will of God to mankind. The application of this passage to Christ consequently proves nothing more than his superiority to all the messengers previously sent from God for the instruction of mankind, thus agreeing with the object of the writer throughout this part of his epistle.

IX. The only other instance of the worship of Christ cited by Mr. Wardlaw, is the sublime vision, described in the 5th chapter of the Revelation, in which all rational creatures are represented attributing common honours to God and to Jesus.

Even in this most splendid description of the glory of Christ, his inferiority to Almighty God is distinctly marked. It is not true, as Mr. Wardlaw asserts, (p. 125.) that he "is represented *as occupying the same throne with the Eter-*

nal." On the contrary, while God *sits upon the throne* in token of his supremacy, (see ch. iv. 2, 3—11. v. 1, 7, 13.) Christ, the lamb, *stands in the middle space between the throne and the elders*, and afterwards goes up to take the book out of the hand of him that sits on the throne. See ver. 6, 7.

The inferiority of Christ to the "Lord God Almighty, who liveth for ever and ever," being so clearly expressed in the vision, the language of the worshipping multitudes ought to be understood conformably to this distinction. They ascribe "blessing and honour and glory and power" both to God and to the Lamb; and to both this tribute was unquestionably due. For, as we learn from many other parts of Scripture, Christ is justly raised to this glorious pre-eminence, as a reward for his virtuous humiliation and obedience unto death, and as the qualification by which he is enabled to discharge the offices of his exalted state. The praise of the angels and redeemed saints is therefore agreeable to the general doctrine of the New Testament; it is agreeable to Unitarianism; it is agreeable to the practice, and consonant to the most grateful feelings and fixed sentiments of Unitarians. They, in their churches upon earth, are sometimes heard to join the adoring throngs above in "saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing:'" and there is even some reason to apprehend that, when Trinitarians employ the same language, they use it, not so much out of regard to the supposed eternal Deity of Christ, as to the might and wisdom, to which he has been elevated by the Father. See Barrow's Sermons, v. II. No. 31. p. 434, 445—448.

But, whilst it is proper, that we should give utterance to these convictions and feelings respecting our highly exalted Redeemer, we are bound to confine to Him, that hath "high-

ly exalted him," our *supreme* affection, our *highest* adoration, and our *most profound* submission.

But it is argued, that, since God and Christ in this instance receive *the same tribute of praise*, they must be equal in eternity, in power, and in glory. Indeed those, who maintain the Supreme Divinity of Christ, commonly represent it as a circumstance of great moment, whenever he is mentioned in conjunction with the Father, and in the same or similar terms with him. It will therefore be proper to consider more particularly, what inferences follow from the application of the same language in the same sentence to Almighty God and to some other being. The following passages may serve the purpose. Ex. xiv. 31. "And the people feared Jehovah, *and believed Jehovah and his servant Moses.*" 1 Sam. xii. 18. "And all the people *greatly feared Jehovah and Samuel.*" 1 Chron. xxix. 20. "And all the congregation blessed Jehovah, God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, *and worshipped Jehovah and the King.*" 2 Chron. xxxi. 8. "And, when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, *they blessed Jehovah and his people Israel.*" Acts xv. 28. "*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit* (that is, to God) *and to us.*" 1 Thess. ii. 10. "*Ye are witnesses and God.*" In these passages, the one True God is "associated" with his creatures *as the object of faith, fear, worship, and blessing*, and is mentioned "in connexion" with them *as giving counsel and bearing witness.* In all such cases we apply the terms to God and to his creatures "in different modifications of meaning;" and we ought to do so likewise, when the Almighty is in the same manner conjoined with his son Jesus Christ. Many other examples might be produced. I shall confine myself to two. 1 Tim. v. 21. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things." Let us suppose for a moment, that, instead of "*the elect angels*,"

St. Paul had written "*the Holy Spirit.*" What a capital and convincing proof of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead. "*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, that thou observe these things.*" Here, it would have been insisted, the three persons of the ever blessed Trinity are appealed to in precisely the same terms, and called upon by a solemn adjuration to witness the injunction of the Apostle delivered to his convert. 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. "And David said to Abigail, 'Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice; and blessed be thou.'" Imagine the words "Son" and "Holy Spirit" in the two last clauses, instead of "thy advice" and "thou."—"*Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel; and blessed be the Son; and blessed be the Holy Spirit.*—I say seriously, that this passage, so written, would have been a stronger proof of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead than any of those, which are now brought forward. I have no doubt, that it would have been insisted on with equal tenacity. It would have been maintained in the most positive terms, that the ascription of blessing and praise, in exactly the same language and in the very same sentence, to these persons, is a proof as clear as language can supply of their equality. The Trinitarians would have reaped additional triumphs; the Unitarians would have been obliged to bend under redoubled charges of obstinacy and impiety.

The sense of the Sacred Writers in attributing glory and praise to the one True God and to Jesus Christ his Son, may be illustrated by the manner, in which the *Mahomedans associate their Prophet with the Almighty.* Of this I shall take a recent example. A gentleman, who about 30 years ago was at Tripoli and wished to travel into the interiour of Africa, obtained from the Bashaw a letter of introduction to the King of Fezzan. It commences in the following lofty language of praise and supplication.

"Praise be unto the Almighty God, and unto our Lord his Prophet Mahommed, whose protection and mercy we crave, and resign ourselves to his holy will. To our son, Sydy Hamed Ben Mohammed, the great and just ruler over his beloved people, may his days be long and happy. Amen.

"Peace, and the protection and blessing of God be with you and preserve you from evil.

"We have to acquaint you our son, that our friend, the English King, hath sent one of his interpreters unto us, and desired we would procure him a safe conveyance to Fezzan," &c. &c.*

I introduce this extract, because the similarity of opinion between Mahommedans and Unitarians is sufficient to illustrate the subject before us. If we were to argue after the manner of those Trinitarians, who say that the New Testament writers must have considered Jesus as equal to the Father, because they express the praises of them both in the very same terms and even in the same sentence, we should conclude, that the Mahommedans hold the same belief respecting their prophet, since they in the very same sentence offer not only praises, but even prayers, both to him and to Almighty God. We know however, that the Mahommedans are as strenuous as the Unitarians in maintaining, that God is but one person; and they certainly entertain no higher conceptions of Mahommed than Unitarians of Jesus. Their language proves, that a person may be conceived to be infinitely inferiour to God as his creature and his dependent, and yet, in consideration of the power and glory to which God has raised him, he may be praised and even petitioned in connexion with his Creator and the Creator of all.

* See Mr. Beaufoy's "Proceedings of the Association for promoting the discovery of the interiour parts of Africa, London, 1791."

CHAPTER IX.

EXAMINATION OF THE REMAINING ARGUMENTS PRODUCED BY MR. WARDLAW TO PROVE THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

THAT I may do full justice to the evidence of the Trinitarian doctrine, and omit none of its "prominent and palpable evidences," I shall in this Chapter consider all the remaining arguments for the Divinity of Christ, which are produced by Mr. Wardlaw, but which do not come under the foregoing heads.

John x. 30. "I and my Father are one." (p. 40.)

Many of the most eminent orthodox criticks both in ancient and modern times have allowed, that this passage affords no proof of the proper deity of Christ. "The ancients," says Calvin, "improperly applied this passage to prove, that Christ is of the same substance with the Father. For Christ does not argue concerning unity of substance, but speaks of the *consent* which he has with the Father, so that whatever is done by Christ will be confirmed by the Father's power."*

Even supposing the doctrine of the Trinity to be previously established, this passage does not seem to me to admit of being interpreted with reference to it. To express that doctrine, we should expect our Lord to have said; "I and my Father *and the Holy Spirit* are one:" and the sentence, even thus completed, would not have been applicable to the purpose, unless it had been further explained, *in what sense* the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are one.

In numerous passages of the New Testament, two or more persons are said to be *one*, that is, *as one*, in order to

* Quoted in Belsham's Calm Inquiry, p. 234.

denote a perfect agreement of design and operation. Thus, 1 Cor. iii. 8. Paul and Apollos, "he that planted and he that watered, were *one*." The expression signified, that, although they undertook different functions, they were as much united in the end and object of their labours, as if they had been but one person. In Gal. iii. 28. the Apostle says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; *for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*." The reception of believers into the Christian church levelled all worldly distinctions, and produced such an entire consent and co-operation, such a union of views, interests, and dispositions, that Jews and Gentiles, freemen and slaves, males and females, came to be, as it were, but one person together with Jesus Christ. Since it was, or ought to have been, as impossible for them to oppose one another as for a man to contend against himself, they are said to have had but one body, one set of members, one heart, and one soul, and to have been "members of the body of Christ, of his flesh and of his bones."—(Acts iv. 32. Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 13, 27. Eph. iv. 4. v. 30.)

Upon the same idea proceeds the observation, that, when a man and woman are united in the marriage connexion, *they are no longer two persons, but one*, Mat. xix. 5, 6. Eph. v. 31.) that is, they have no longer any separate objects or interests, but agree in their aims, wishes, and affections.

These instances lead to the true interpretation of our Lord's remark, *that he and the Father were one person*.—The expression must be understood figuratively. It signified, that Jesus had precisely the same designs and wishes with the Father, and that they co-operated as if they had but a single mind.

That this is the true interpretation of our Saviour's words, is placed beyond a doubt by those passages, in which he

repeats the assertion, that he and the Father were one, praying that all his disciples might be one *in the same sense*. John xvii. 11. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one as we are*." Ver. 20—23. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, who shall believe on me through their word, *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*; that the world may believe, that thou hast sent me: and the glory, which thou gavest me, I have given them, *that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me*, that they may be made perfect in one."

If this be the only allowable explanation of the phrase, "*I and my Father are one*," what has been said sufficiently illustrates another passage, produced by Mr. Wardlaw, of a similar nature. John xiv. 9, 10. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." (p. 40.)

The only remaining passage, which Mr. Wardlaw has produced, and almost the only remaining passage, which has commonly been produced by Trinitarians, as a proof of the Deity of Christ, is Phil. ii. 6. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (p. 43, 52, 178, 219, 253, 422, 423.)

After attending carefully to the ingenious argumentation, by which Hammond and a few others have attempted to justify this translation, I am satisfied, that it cannot possibly be deduced out of the original words of St. Paul. The literal translation of them is, "Who, being in the form of God, did not esteem it a prey to be as God." Since there is an evident necessity for some suppliment in the last clause, and the substantive verb (εἶναι) "*to be*" is seldom used in the New Testament to denote *mere existence*, we may properly insert the word *honoured*, and read "*to be*

honoured as God." The meaning of the Apostle may be thus expressed; ver. 5—8. "Imitate the condescension and benevolence of Jesus Christ, who, although he resembled God in the possession of extraordinary power and wisdom, did not grasp at Divine honours, but humbled himself to the performance of servile offices, and, in obedience to the will of his Father, submitted unto death, even the painful and ignominious death of the cross."

The translation, adopted by the modern Unitarians, is not only sanctioned by the authority of many of the ancient Fathers, but has received the approbation of Erasmus, Grotius, Le Clerc, Wetstein, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Bull, Dr. Wall, Archbishop Newcome, and many other learned men among the ranks of Trinitarian criticks.

Although I approve of Mr. Wardlaw's translation "to be *on an equality* with God," and admire the remarks, by which he has vindicated it, yet I know of no objection in his whole volume more flimsy than that which he urges against the Unitarian interpretation of this passage. St. Paul, in order to give a lively representation of the benevolent condescension of Christ, draws *a contrast* between the conduct, which one of his transcendent power and dignity might have adopted, (ver. 6.) and the humble conduct, which Jesus did adopt, (ver. 7, 8.) Mr. Wardlaw takes one clause of the sentence, *viz.* the 6th verse, apart from the rest; and, thus confining the attention of his readers to the former part of the contrast, he asks, "Is it then to be the peculiar subject of admiration and astonishment,—is it held up to us as the example, which of all examples we are most sedulously to imitate, that a creature, a man, possessing by Divine communication a singular portion of miraculous power and wisdom, did not pervert these high endowments to his own selfish ends!—that he was not guilty of the most heaven-daring presumption and impiety!" &c. Thus

he runs on to the bottom of the page ; (p. 254.) and I doubt not, that many of his thoughtless readers, who prefer this idle rant to the simplicity that is in Christ, will acclaim to his criticisms. But to perceive their extreme futility, it is only necessary to read the sentence *throughout*, so as to bring into notice the *contrast*, which it describes with beautiful and simple eloquence. It must be remembered also, that Mr. Wardlaw's charge of "unnatural and vapid tameness" fixes itself upon the inspired Apostle, and not upon those who give the exact translation and only admissible exposition of his words.

Besides producing passages, which he supposes to affirm the Divinity of Christ in direct terms, Mr. Wardlaw argues from certain general views, which, if Christ be considered as a mere creature, however highly exalted, "are bereft of all their force and propriety, and appear altogether unnatural and unaccountable." p. 45—55, 133. These considerations are, the views displayed in the New Testament of the love of God in the mission of Jesus Christ; the accounts of the condescension and love of Christ in executing his mediatorial office ; the warm transport and gratitude of the Sacred Writers in contemplating these subjects ; the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God ; and his high claims to the love and obedience of his followers. Mr. Wardlaw maintains, that, except upon the supposition of Christ's proper Deity, the language of the Scriptures upon these subjects "violates every sentiment of propriety, and is the mere rhapsody of admiration, the unmeaning bombast of eulogy."

Although such arguments as these, in the way in which Mr. Wardlaw has illustrated them, afford a fine field for eloquent declamation, and are well adapted to excite the wonder, applause, and sympathy of a listening crowd, they are altogether out of place in a work of Scriptural investi-

gation. The evidences, by which the principal doctrines of Christianity are supported, may certainly be perceived by the understanding without the excitements of fancy and feeling. So little occasion is there to rouse them into action, that the danger is, lest our passions should hurry away our judgments, lest those prejudices, which we have been accustomed to connect with the exercise of our devotional affections, and which are magnified in our conceptions far beyond their real importance, should render our minds callous to the impression even of the most clear, decisive, and abundant evidence. It ought therefore to be our serious endeavour, instead of indulging, to check the sallies of passion and fancy, and to form a cool, accurate, and impartial judgment of the true state of each disputed opinion. Before discussing subjects of such vast extent and transcendent importance, we ought to calm our perturbed spirits in some such language as the following;

> "Imagination's airy wing repress;
> "Lock up thy senses; let no passion stir;
> "Wake all to reason; let her reign alone;
> "Then, in thy soul's deep silence, and the depth
> "Of Nature's silence, midnight, thus inquire."

Mr. Wardlaw's impressive declamation, instead of conducing in the least degree to the discovery of truth, can only serve to fortify the mind in its attachment to its preconceived opinions, whether they be true or false; and, if upon careful revision it should prove, that they are *false*, then how exceedingly indiscreet and indecorous are his assertions, that, except his interpretations of Scripture be admitted, Jesus Christ himself employed "the language of unexampled presumption, and outraged every feeling of fitness and propriety."

Although it might be sufficient to enter my decided protest against this method of arguing, and to observe, that, if

the Deity of Christ be not taught *in explicit terms*, mere *general considerations* can be of no avail to prove it, yet I shall add a few other remarks in reply to this part of Mr. Wardlaw's publication.

The very passages, which Mr. Wardlaw has produced as containing sentiments capable of being justified only on the supposition of our Lord's proper Deity, suggest other grounds for those representations which they exhibit. *The love of God* is stated to appear, not in sending one of the Persons of the Trinity to be united to a suffering mortal, but in "not sparing *his own Son;*" (the most eminently favoured and distinguished of his creatures, Rom. viii. 32.) in "giving him for us, *that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life;*" (John iii. 16.) in giving him for us, "*while we were yet sinners,*" (Rom. v. 8.) in loving us *before we loved him*, and in sending his Son *to be the propitiation for our sins.*" (1 John iv. 9, 10.) According to the Scriptural account, the love of God in the mission of Christ was manifested rather in the merciful and beneficent *ends* to be accomplished by sending him, than in *the original dignity* of the person sent.

But Mr. Wardlaw asks, If the doctrine of Unitarians upon the person of Christ be true, why do the Scriptures speak of his mission in language so much more elevated than that which is applied to other Divine messengers?—Because the messages of Jesus were infinitely more important, more consoling, and more encouraging, than those of any other prophet, and because he far surpassed all others in the holiness of his life, the greatness of his endowments, and the spotless purity, the majestick dignity, and the all-amiable excellency of his character.—"But why do we not find similar language applied to Peter or Paul, although they also proved their sincerity, and sealed their testimony, with their blood?"—Because they were not only

much inferiour to Jesus in all the above-mentioned qualifications, but acted as his servants and instruments, deriving from him those fuller and clearer representations of his doctrine, which they diffused through the world after his ascension. Besides, it is needless to inquire, why the New Testament does not resound the praises of the authors, by whom it was composed. Modesty and propriety forbade it. But, after they had both lived and died, as their blessed master did, for the good of mankind, then, to borrow the words of a learned author, "to the honour of these excellent poor men conspicuous monuments were erected every where; anniversary memorials of their names and virtues were celebrated; they were never mentioned or thought of without respect; *their commendations were interwoven with the praises of their great* LORD AND MAKER, *whom they honoured.*" (Barrow's Sermons, v. I. p. 55.) The simple solemn rites, by which the primitive Christians testified their regard to the memory of those, who died in support of their religion, cannot be better described than in the following words of the learned Dr. Cave: "In those sad and bloody times, when the Christian religion triumphed over persecution, and gained upon the world by nothing more than the constant and resolute sufferings of its professors, whom no threatenings or torments could baffle out of it; the people generally had a vast reverence for those who suffered thus deeply in the cause of Christianity, and laid down their lives for the confirmation of it. They looked upon confessors and martyrs, as the great champions of their religion, who resisted unto blood, and died upon the spot to make good its ground, and to maintain its honour and reputation; and therefore thought it very reasonable to do all possible honour to their memories, partly that others might be encouraged to the like patience and fortitude, and partly that virtue even in this world might not lose its

reward. Hence they were wont once a-year to meet at the graves of martyrs, there solemnly to recite their sufferings and their triumphs, to praise their virtues, and to bless God for their pious examples, for their holy lives, and their happy deaths, for their palms and crowns." (Cave's Primitive Christianity, p. 126.) None but the hard-hearted scorner, casting his eye upon this beautiful picture, would cavil against these offerings of gratitude, veneration, and piety, as "utterly extravagant and unaccountable:" and, if they were justly due to the merits and services of the *martyrs* to the Christian religion, a higher tribute was owing to its *author*, even though in his original nature he was but a mortal man.*

Mr. Wardlaw has produced but one more argument for the Deity of Christ. He affirms, (p. 174, 420.) that the accounts of the miraculous conception of our Lord in the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke's Gospels, "cannot be made to comport with the Unitarian creed." He has not however advanced any argument in support of this assertion; nor was it possible for him to prove, that the generation in a supernatural manner of a being, which, when born, should not be the Supreme God, exceeds the efforts of Omnipotence.

With this unsupported assertion he has connected several remarks, which it is necessary for me to notice in order to counteract their false tendency. I shall however only confront his assertions *with an exact statement of facts*, abstaining from reflections.

Some time in the course of the last year (1813) the Religious Tract Society of Glasgow published a small pamphlet, having the following title, "An Exposure of the Unwar-

* [This reasoning is strengthened in the opinion of those Unitarians who hold the pre-existent dignity of Christ.—Editor.]

rantable Liberties taken by the Unitarians with the Sacred Scriptures, in their Version of the New Testament; with some critical remarks on their interpretation of particular passages of Scripture; extracted (with the author's permission) from Dr. Magee's work on Atonement and Sacrifice."

There was nothing either in the substance of these Extracts or their spirit, which *deserved* a reply. They are stamped with falsehood in their very Title, representing the "Improved Version of the New Testament" as *the version of the Unitarians*, although it is the production of individual Unitarians only, and, far from having received the general approbation of the Unitarian body, or being considered by them as a proper substitute in publick worship or domestick reading for the common translation, has been almost as severely criticised by some of them as by its orthodox revilers.

The subject, to which these Extracts principally relate, is the genuineness of the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke's Gospels. In the Sermon preached at the opening of the Unitarian Chapel in this city, which was published for the express purpose of preventing misrepresentation, by giving a plain account of the opinions held by Unitarians and the grounds of their dissent, and which has been generally allowed to have answered its object by being clear and accurate upon these points, it was stated that the genuineness of these chapters is a subject, upon which Unitarians are divided in opinion. Yet Mr. Wardlaw in the Discourse, in which he quotes that Sermon for the purpose of objecting to it, and the Religious Tract Society in their Extracts from Dr. Magee, represent the *spuriousness* of these chapters as a general principle of the Unitarian creed. The "unwarrantable liberties," complained of, were however at the utmost chargeable only upon a certain portion of

the Unitarians, *viz.* those, who deny the miraculous conception of Christ, or who were concerned in the publication of the "Improved Version."

As Mr. Belsham was the author principally attacked in this "Exposure," it was thought proper, that he should be requested to write a reply. With great kindness and promptitude he assented, and the Glasgow Unitarian Fund published "An address to the Inquirers after Christian truth, in reply to the Extracts from Dr. Magee's book on Atonement and Sacrifice,"—a work, which appeared to me as much superiour to the other in *temper* as in style and argument.

The editors of the "Improved Version" have expressed strong doubts, whether the account of the conception, birth, and childhood of Christ (Mat. i. 17—ii.) be a genuine portion of St. Matthew's Gospel. Among other arguments they bring forward this consideration, that the whole passage was wanting in the copies used by the Ebionites, or ancient Hebrew Christians. Dr. Magee replies, that the Ebionites also rejected the three last Gospels and the Epistles of Paul, and that, if the editors of the "Improved Version" attribute any weight to their evidence concerning the passage in question, they "ought to receive their testimony throughout," and reject "all the New Testament except St. Matthew." Mr. Belsham answers, (Address, p. 8, 9.) that it may be perfectly proper to pay regard to the testimony of the Ebionites, when it concurs with other facts and probabilities, although their evidence ought to be decidedly rejected, when it is disproved by clear and certain considerations of an opposite tendency; just as we assent without hesitation to Livy's account of the battle of Cannæ, which is confirmed by other historians, although we utterly disbelieve the assertion of the same author that an ox spoke, because this story is unsupported by any con-

curring evidence. Thus Mr. Belsham argues from a comparison of the testimony of Livy with the testimony *of the Ebionites*. Mr. Wardlaw (Note K.) represents him as comparing Livy with *St. Matthew*. Although Mr. Belsham's tract contains no such words and no such sentiment, Mr. Wardlaw introduces the following passage, among others correctly cited, in the form of a quotation from that pamphlet; "The Evangelist Matthew relates, that Jesus of Nazareth died on a cross; and I believe him. The same Evangelist Matthew relates, that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin; but I believe him not." This account of the argument is accompanied with charges against Mr. Belsham of "bitterness and violence," "the most evasive sophistry," "obvious and flagrant inconsistency," "slyly shifting his ground," "levity and impiety," "parade," and "unwarrantable presumption." Upon such grounds and in such language has Mr. Wardlaw undertaken to censure a man, who is greatly his superiour in years, in talents, in learning, and in celebrity; who, in his lucid and vigorous writings, though he appears admirably qualified to repress blustering bigotry and presuming ignorance, always respects sincerity of intention and a good moral character; and who is in the highest degree estimable for the urbanity of his manners, the integrity of his principles, and the candour and benevolence of his heart.

CHAPTER X.

EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE PRODUCED TO PROVE THE DISTINCT PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit, in maintaining which orthodox Christians differ from Unitarians, is this; *that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, distinct from the Father.* In order therefore to establish the Trinitarian doctrine, it was necessary for Mr. Wardlaw to produce proofs, not only that the Holy Spirit is a person, and that he is possessed of Divine attributes, *but also that he is a different being from God the Father.* Nearly all the passages however, which he has brought forward, go no further at the very utmost than to show, first, that *personal*, and secondly, that *Divine* properties are attributed in Scripture to the Holy Spirit. The other circumstance, which is the only matter in dispute, he has almost omitted to notice. In addition to those passages, which were alleged as testimonies to the doctrine of the Trinity in general, he has only produced the following in proof of the *distinct* personality and Divinity of the Spirit.

1. 1 Cor. vi. 19. "What! know ye not, *that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit*, which is in you, which ye have of God?" (p. 284, 285.) The Holy Spirit is here evidently represented as *distinct from God.* That it is also God himself, is argued by Mr. Wardlaw from a comparison of this passage with others, in which the same persons are said to be, not as here, "the temple of *the Holy Spirit*," but "the temple of *God.*" 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

Although this argument has much more of the semblance of truth than the generality of those adduced by

Mr. Wardlaw, it is totally insufficient to establish a doctrine requisite to the salvation of mankind. That "the holy spirit" here signifies the dispositions and habits produced by the supernatural influence of God, appears evident, because Christians are said to "*have it from God.*" In various passages, which I formerly cited, (P. II. ch. 8. § 2, 5.) these dispositions are represented as *dwelling* or *residing* in the minds of Christians. By carrying the metaphor a little further, Christians are designated the *temple* of that holy influence, *the pure and sacred abode* of those heavenly dispositions. By a different view of the subject, they are also conceived to be so nearly allied and assimilated to the Divine Being, that God himself, as it were, enters into their very substance, and resides in them as if they were the temple of his peculiar presence. Hence St. Paul, in another part of his writings, (Eph. ii. 22.) says, that Christians "are builded together for a habitation of God *through the Spirit;*" which signifies, *that holy and benevolent dispositions*, continually cherished in their breasts, make them a fit residence for God himself.

2. 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us *by his spirit:*" (δια του πνευματος αυτου.) (p. 285.)

The last clause implies, that "*the spirit of God*" is something distinct from the Father. That it here signifies *his inspiration*, is equally manifest, because it is represented as the *means*, by which He communicates knowledge to His creatures, and reveals to them the secrets of His will. In the next verse however, (ver. 11.) "the spirit of God" evidently means *God himself*, the Apostle here, as in other places, using the same phrase in two different senses. In the 12th verse, he again employs the term according to its

ordinary acceptation; "Now have we received, not the spirit of the World, *but the spirit which is of God*," (το πνευμα το εκ του Θεου,) that is, We are guided *by those dispositions and influences*, which are supernaturally vouchsafed to us by God, and not by those, which are prevalent among the great mass of mankind.

3. Mr. Wardlaw further asserts, that *the Divine power and sovereignty* of the Spirit are declared in those passages, where Jesus speaks of himself as *casting out demons by the Spirit of God*, (Mat. xii. 28.) where he is said to have been "*quickened by the Spirit*," (1 Peter iii. 18—20.) and where God is said to "*quicken the mortal bodies of Christians by his spirit which dwelleth in them*. (Rom. viii. 11.) These passages are thus far applicable to Mr. Wardlaw's purpose, that in them "*the spirit*" signifies something *distinct from the Father;* but that it cannot mean the third of the supposed persons in the Godhead is evident, because it is spoken of as *the instrument*, by means of which certain effects were produced. In these passages it can only denote that energetick influence of God, through which Christ healed demoniacks, and was himself raised from the dead, through which also his disciples are raised from the death of *sin* to the life of *virtue*. The Trinitarian exposition of these passages leads to the greatest incongruities. It represents the second Person of the Trinity performing miracles and restored to life, not by his own omnipotence, but through the instrumentality of the third Person, to whom he is equal in power and glory, and whose co-operation he could not require.

4. The only other passage, in which the Spirit is mentioned as distinct from God, and which Mr. Wardlaw conceives to be a proof, not only of his *distinctness* from the Father, but of his *equality* with him, is Heb. ix. 14. (p. 289.) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who *through*

the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?" The expression " *through the eternal Spirit*" (δια πνευματος αιωνιου) denotes that the spirit served as an instrument, by which Christ was enabled to offer himself without spot to God. Here therefore it signifies something not only *distinct* from God, but *inferiour* to him. Why then is it called " *eternal ?*" This, I confess, is a difficulty ; for, as the passage now stands, it can no more be reconciled to the Unitarian doctrine, than to the opinion of the orthodox. I am inclined with the Editors of the Improved Version to suspect, that αιωνιου, *Eternal*, is not the genuine reading. For, in the first place, since Griesbach has been so exceedingly cautious in his emendations as to make no change in the received text except when the evidence was three or fourfold in his favour, it may be proper after due inquiry and upon established principles to make further alterations than he has ventured upon, although, so far as he has gone, he must be implicitly followed in his corrections : secondly, it appears from Griesbach's note, that there is very copious evidence for the *rejection* of this word as well as for *retaining* it ; thirdly, the adjective was perhaps originally written in the contracted form, $\overline{\text{αιου}}$, which would facilitate the change of αγιου into αιωνιου. I bring forward these remarks principally with the view of vindicating the editors of the Improved Version from Mr. Wardlaw's angry reprehensions. For, even if the common reading were indisputably correct, the passage would afford no proof of the *Divinity* of the Holy Spirit, who, if he be the Supreme God, could not have been employed as the *instrument*, by whose aid Christ was enabled to undergo the pains of death.

Mr. Wardlaw (p. 281—286) agrees with Unitarians, that " *the holy spirit*" sometimes denotes the various *influences*

of God upon the minds of men. But he intimates, that the examples of its occurrence in this sense are very rare, and that "the ordinary current phraseology of the Scriptures is framed on the supposition of the Spirit's personality." He certainly ought not to have advanced such an assertion without examining all the passages of the New Testament, in which the phrase is found, so as to be able to judge whether his representation is true. This I have done; and the result, which I have given in the 8th Chapter of the 2d Part, is directly the reverse of Mr. Wardlaw's statement. The phrases "holy spirit" and "spirit of God" are *commonly* employed to denote influences, *seldom* to describe a person; and, where those influences are personified, we can trace the affections and sentiments, which introduce and justify the use of this figure of speech.

It is a consideration of no small weight against the Trinitarian doctrine, that the Bible contains *no ascription of praise or glory to the Holy Spirit*, which would scarcely have been the case, had the Spirit been entitled to such honours equally with God the Father. In consequence of this deficiency, Mr. Wardlaw, though he concludes some of his preceding discourses relating to the nature and office of Christ with suitable doxologies from the Scriptures, is here obliged to borrow that from the Common Prayer of the Church of England; "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *and to the Holy Spirit*, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."*

* The statement of the evidence for the Unitarian doctrine, contained in this volume, may serve as a reply to a Sermon, published in answer to mine by the Rev. A. Symington of Paisley; which I thus mention, because it appears to me to be written with sincere piety, and with no reflections against me or other Unitarians but such as I easily excuse. Although this writer, equally with Mr. Wardlaw, so far as I can judge from his Sermon, possesses many qualifications for great respectability and usefulness in the Christian ministry, he does not seem to have the means, or the habit, of applying to those sources of infor-

Mr. Wardlaw (p. 294.) closes his observations in proof of the Trinitarian doctrine with the following remarks; "While I am thus firmly convinced, that the Scriptures are incapable of any fair and consistent explanation without the admission of the doctrine of the Trinity, I entertain strong doubts about the correctness of the notion, commonly received, of what is called the *eternal procession of the Son from the Father, and of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, in the essence of Deity.*" This candid avowal affords a gratifying illustration of the progress of good sense and liberality of sentiment in matters of religion. Five hundred years ago, a man would have been imprisoned and perhaps impaled, not for denying, but even for *asserting* the eternal *procession* of the Son. For the orthodox doctrine is, that the Son is not *proceeding*, but *begotten*. (See the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.) Mr. Wardlaw however, does not condescend to notice a distinction, which formerly exercised the acumen of grave councils and sovereign pontiffs; and he not only pours contempt upon the whole question between the *procession* and *generation* of the Son, but he even expresses strong doubts upon the general doctrine of the *derivation* of the Son from the Father and of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. If he had published such sentiments at any period between the fifth century and the Reformation, I have no doubt he

mation, by which alone it is possible to determine the import of disputed passages of Scripture. I humbly conceive, that Ministers, so situated, while they follow their own judgment in the zealous and faithful use of the other talents, equally important and valuable, with which they are favoured by Providence, ought to leave the emendation of the Greek text, the translation of it into English, and even, to a certain degree, the interpretation of it, when translated, to those persons, either among Unitarians or the Orthodox, who by the requisite labour and study have become intimately acquainted with the original languages of Scripture, and who are versed in the impartial application of the sound and established principles of Biblical Criticism.

would have been tortured without mercy. Thanks then to Luther and Calvin and Socinus, and the rest of the noble and independent minds, who first asserted the rights of private judgment, taught men to use their understandings with some degree of vigour and freedom, and gradually drew off their attention from those unmeaning sounds and frivolous disputes, which had been magnified by ecclesiasticks for their secular advantage. Let us, as we profit by the labours and the sufferings of these magnanimous innovators, imitate their great examples. By pursuing the path, in which they trod, we shall find that the religion of Jesus is not only as much, but even *more* rational, more plain, and more useful, than it appeared to most of them.

Mr. Wardlaw's confession also illustrates the great advantage of having the mind free from the shackles of subscription to human articles. The Churches of Rome, England, and Scotland, still insist with peremptory minuteness upon the belief that the Son is begotten not proceeding, and the Holy Spirit proceeding not begotten, and admit no one into their communion, who does not give his assent to the truth of these distinctions. But, while the clergy of these self-manacled communities continue to court the veneration of the vulgar by the profession of pristine nonsense, Mr. Wardlaw has boldly loosened the yoke from off his neck; and it is to be hoped, that having proceeded thus far, and wishing to conform his belief not to popular opinions or to human creeds, but to the only infallible test, the word of God, he will pursue his course of manly and independent, but humble and cautious inquiry, and at some future period employ his strong powers of reasoning and persuasion in enforcing those great and simple truths of the Christian religion, which are agreeable to common sense and applicable to common life, and which are level to the most homely, while they fill the comprehension of the sublimest understanding.

CHAPTER XI.

PREVALENCE OF UNITARIANISM IN THE EARLY AGES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE.

Although Mr. Wardlaw (Preface, p. ix.) declines entering upon the question respecting the faith of the primitive Christians, in various parts of his volume, he takes it for granted that the early Church was Calvinistick, thus clothing his doctrines in the venerable vestments of antiquity, and countenancing them by the authority of those, who had the best opportunities for receiving them in their unadulterated simplicity. Not only in reply to these assumptions, but for other important reasons, it will be proper to devote a Chapter to this subject. This inquiry is in its results almost as favourable to Unitarian principles as the examination of the Scriptures themselves. All that I have ever read has tended to confirm me in the belief, that the doctrine of the Trinity, as now held by the orthodox, was not generally received in the Christian Church until the 5th or 6th century. Instead of bringing passages to prove this fact from the ancient Christian writers themselves, which would lead into a long, learned, and unpopular discussion, and for which likewise I am wholly unqualified, I think it amply sufficient to cite the opinions of certain eminent theologians in modern times, who devoted themselves with unwearied assiduity to the study of the ancient Fathers, and who, being firm believers in the Trinitarian system, could not be inclined to mis-state or discolour facts in favour of the opposite hypothesis.

1. The first testimony, which I shall produce to prove the universal prevalence of Unitarianism in the primitive church, is that of the learned historian, Mosheim. He

gives the following account of the doctrines, taught and maintained by Christians in the first and second centuries. (See Maclaine's Translation, V. I. p. 183. also, p. 184—187, 115, &c.)

"The Christian system, as it was hitherto taught, preserved its native and beautiful simplicity, and was comprehended in a small number of articles. The public teachers inculcated no other doctrines, than those that are contained in what is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed:* and, in the method of illustrating them, all vain subtleties, all mysterious researches, every thing that was beyond the reach of common capacities, were carefully avoided. This will by no means appear surprising to those who consider, that, at this time, there was not the least controversy about those capital doctrines of Christianity, which were afterwards so keenly debated in the church; and who reflect, that the bishops of these primitive times were, for the most part, plain and illiterate men, remarkable rather for their piety and zeal, than for their learning and eloquence."

2. The second testimony to the Unitarianism of the primitive Church is that of Flacius Illyricus, one of the most learned and zealous of the Lutheran Reformers. I quote his opinion from the works of Dr. Lardner, (V. iv. p. 61, 62.) together with the observations of that most candid, judicious, and erudite author.

"According to Matthias Flacius Illyricus, in the preface to his Clavis Scripturæ, or Key to the Scriptures, 'The Christian writers, who lived soon after Christ and his apostles, discoursed like philosophers, of the law and its moral precepts, and of the nature of virtue and vice: but they were totally ignorant of man's natural corruption, and the mysteries of the gospel and Christ's benefits.' 'His countryman St. Jerom,' he says, 'was well skilled in the lan-

guages, and endeavoured to explain the Scriptures by versions and commentaries. But after all he was able to do very little, being ignorant of the human disease, and of Christ the physician : and wanting both the key of Scripture, and the lamb of God to open to him.'

" The same Flacius, or some other learned writer of his time, in the preface to the Centuriæ Magdeburgenses, observes of Eusebius bishop of Cæsarea : ' That it is a very low and imperfect description, which he gives of a Christian ; making him only a man, who by the knowledge of Christ and his doctrine, is brought to the worship of the one true God, and the practice of sobriety, righteousness, patience, and other virtues. But he has not a word about regeneration, or imputed righteousness.'

" Poor, ignorant primitive Christians ! I wonder, how they could find the way to heaven ! They lived near the times of Christ and his apostles. They highly valued, and diligently read the holy Scriptures, and some wrote commentaries upon them ; but yet, it seems, they knew little or nothing of their religion ; though they embraced and professed it with the manifest hazard of all earthly good things, and many of them laid down their lives, rather than renounce it. Truly we of these times are very happy in our orthodoxy ; but I wish, that we did more excel in those virtues, which they, and the Scriptures likewise, I think, recommend, as the distinguishing properties of a Christian. And I am not a little apprehensive, that many things, which now make a fair show among us, and in which we mightily pride ourselves, will in the end prove weeds only, on which the owner of the ground sets no value."

3. Another learned Reformer and rigorous defender of Orthodoxy, who maintains the same opinion, is M. Jurieu.

Speaking of the doctrine of the Trinity as believed both by Papists and Calvinists, he says, "Every one knows that this mystery remained incomplete, (*informè*,) without its right form or shape, until the council of Nice, nay, until that of Constantinople;" and he asserts, and by proper citations fully proves, that all the ancients of the three first ages believed the Son to have been created by, and inferiour to, the Father.*

4. A higher authority cannot be produced than that of the impartial and learned Jesuit, PETAVIUS. In his admired and valuable work upon Dogmatical Theology, he maintains as an indisputable fact, and proves by numerous citations and a very learned discussion of the subject, that the Fathers, who flourished before the council of Nice, believed that the Supreme God brought the Son into existence in order that He might employ him as his instrument and minister in the formation of the world, and that the Father not only existed *before* the Son as his creator, but was superiour to him in power. Hence Petavius blames them for entertaining opinions of the Son, which were unworthy of his dignity and altogether absurd. (Dogmata Theol. V. II. Præf. et Lib. I. c. 3, 4, 5.)

Thus do some of the most eminent authors of the Trinitarian party plainly confess, either in the way of information or in the way of complaint, that the doctrines of three co-equal and co-eternal Persons in the Godhead, and of the union of the Divine and human natures in Jesus Christ, were unnoticed and unknown in the primitive Church.

* See Emlyn's Tracts, V. II. p. 277—283. and Henry Taylor's Apology of Ben Mordecai, 2d edit. V. I. p. 46. These authors refer to Jurieu's Lettres Pastorales, in the French, No. vi. p. 126. 12mo. which I have not had an opportunity of consulting.

Another proof that the early Christian Church was Unitarian may be derived from a review of the controversies carried on upon this question between the defenders of the two opposite systems. Many learned men, from the Reformation almost to our own times, have publickly engaged in this dispute, and have extracted from the writings of the Christian Fathers those passages, which were conceived to present evidence in favour of each side of the questions. The latest controversy upon this subject was that carried on between Dr. Priestley, who maintained that all Christians were originally Unitarians, and Bishop Horsley, who employed his talents and eloquence in favour of the opposite opinion. Dr. Priestley with great labour and perseverance collected an abundance of passages from the works of the Christian Fathers, to show that Unitarianism was the system held by the primitive believers, and to disclose the origin of the doctrines, which have since been so generally received. His "History of the corruptions of Christianity" was answered by Dr. Horsley, who, I presume, was not his inferiour in *learning*, and who was highly honoured and rewarded on account of the able services, which he was conceived to have rendered to his own party. Yet Dr. Horsley has completely failed in proving that the first Christians were orthodox, or rather has not even attempted it. I think it is evident, that a man of his talents would have proved the Trinity of co-equal and co-eternal Persons in the Godhead to be a doctrine of the primitive church, if this had been possible; and, since he has not cited any passages from the earliest Christian writers, in which this doctrine is contained, I conclude that no such passages are to be found.*

[* See the Review of the controversy between Priestley and Horsley, in the three first volumes of the Cambridge Repository, particularly the conclusion, Vol. III. p. 250—299. Edit.]

The council of Nice, to which allusion is made in the preceding remarks, was held A. D. 325. It was an assemblage of Bishops, convened from all quarters by the emperour Constantine, with a view to terminate the disputes which agitated the Church. Here was passed, by a majority of votes, the celebrated *Nicene Creed*, which has since been considered as one of the principal standards of orthodoxy. The tenour of this creed however proves, that even then the doctrine of the Trinity did not amount to what it is at present. Hitherto no one appears to have imagined that the three persons of the Trinity were *co-equal*. In this creed the Son is only affirmed to be "*of the same substance* with the Father." He was believed to be subordinate to the Father in all his operations, and to derive from him all his power and glory. Hence he is called "GOD OF GOD," (θεος εκ θεου,) whereas the Father was called "GOD OF HIMSELF," (αυτοθεος,) by which was understood, that the existence and nature of the Son were derived from the Father, but that the Father was uncreated, self-existent, and independent. We also remark, that this creed makes no mention of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and contains no hint whatsoever of the doctrines of Original Sin and Vicarious Atonement, but employs, respecting the ends of Christ's advent and death, the sublime and beautiful language of the Scriptures.

As the well-meaning attempt of Constantine to restore peace by calling this council proved unsuccessful, another was summoned to meet at Constantinople, A. D. 381. It was here for the first time solemnly decreed, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are *equal* in power and glory. In 431 another council was held at Ephesus, in which it was voted, that *the two natures of Christ make but one person*, and in 451 another was held at Chalcedon to determine, that, notwithstanding their personal union, the Divine

and human natures of Christ continue distinct. Thus the doctrine was gradually brought to the state, in which it has been since received by the reputed orthodox. It was now established by Law, and supported by the united strength of the learned, the wealthy, and the powerful. Hence the great mass of Christian professors were speedily gained over, and in a short time the extensive schism of the Mahommedans alone remained from among those who believed in the Divine authority of Jesus, to advocate the despised and rejected doctrine of the Unity of God. The immediate consequence was, that together with the polytheism of the heathens, Christendom seemed to be embracing their wretchedness and degradation. The whole horizon was again enveloped in the dismal mists of ignorance, and THE SON OF RIGHTEOUSNESS was apparently blotted out from the firmament of heaven. "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people."

Although therefore I concede to Mr. Wardlaw that his doctrine has been supported by all the governments of Christendom since the end of the fifth century, I maintain that this circumstance tells little indeed in its favour. During the four first ages, we have the most abundant evidence, that Unitarianism was the only acknowledged form of Christianity.

To Unitarians then we are indebted for the preservation of the Gospel, when its very existence was threatened by the fiercest persecution. They were Unitarians, who not only adorned Christianity by the excellence of their lives, but defended it by their deaths. Without their efforts and sacrifices the Scriptures would have been destroyed, the Gospel lost. In short, to them, under God, we owe almost all the religion and virtue, which now exists in the world. I humbly conceive, that these facts should produce in

Christians of every sect some *respect* for Unitarianism, but that they should weigh with peculiar force upon the Unitarians of modern times, by inciting them to emulate all the great and amiable virtues of these first members of their sect, to guard against a second corruption of their principles, and to maintain with zeal, sincerity, and mutual affection, that great cause, in which so many thousands of their primitive brethren expired.

CHAPTER XII.

OTHER DOCTRINES OF MR. WARDLAW'S DISCOURSES. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HIM AND THE AUTHOR. CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now stated the evidence for the strict Unity of God, in opposition to the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and for the inferiority of Jesus Christ in opposition to the opinion of his Divine and human natures, deriving my arguments from the appearances of the surrounding world, from the declarations of the Holy Scriptures, and from the history of the Primitive Church. Every reader will be able, by the cool and dispassionate examination of what I have written, to decide for himself these momentous questions. The impression made upon my own mind by considering the various evidences which I have brought together is, that if it be not certain that the commonly received doctrine of the Trinity is false, there is an end of all religion and no certainty upon any subject.

If these main questions be decided, there is no occasion to enter upon the discussion of the remaining topicks, which Mr. Wardlaw agitates in his volume. It will be allowed, that Unitarians are entitled to the much honoured name of CHRISTIANS, so that the controversial part of the *last* Discourse needs no distinct reply. With respect to the 11th and 12th Discourses, "*On the Influences of the Holy Spirit*," it is enough to observe, that they proceed throughout upon a misrepresentation of Unitarianism; for Unitarians have in general, though not universally, confessed their need of such Influences, and have been accustomed to pray for the participation of them, conceiving however that they

are conferred by the one true God, the Father, and not by a distinct Divine agent, and that they *assist and carry forward*, instead of *preventing* or *anticipating*, our own endeavours to do the will of God.—The Calvinistick view of *Atonement*, according to Mr. Wardlaw's own confession, falls with the doctrine of our Saviour's Supreme Divinity. So far as the doctrine of satisfaction by the death of Christ opposes the Scriptural representations of the free grace and mercy of God towards penitents, every reader will find the best antidote in the humble and serious examination of the Sacred Volume. I conceive that there is not the least necessity for my entering upon this subject. Our various duties towards God, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves, and the terms of our acceptance with the Almighty, are so plainly, so forcibly, and so repeatedly stated in the Scriptures, that all persons of honest minds may there find the easiest answer to the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

When I began to compose this Vindication, I formed after much thought the resolution of requesting Mr. Wardlaw to review the manuscript before it went to the press; and, when I seemed to be drawing towards a conclusion, I communicated my wishes to him in the following letter.

"To the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, Glasgow."

"*Glasgow, Oct. 17th*, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR,

"I am sensible that I have great need of your indulgence for neglecting so long to acknowledge the receipt of your late Publication. My delay has been occasioned by a variety of avocations, which prevented me from turning myself to this subject until about six weeks ago. Hav-

ing now perused your Discourses with great diligence, I have the pleasure of thanking you most sincerely for your obliging attention in sending me a copy. I shall not in this letter give any opinion of the work, because you will find my thoughts freely expressed, both as to its merits and its defects, in the Reply which will shortly appear. But I have a request to make of you, the importance of which, I trust, merits your consideration. Being exceedingly desirous that our controversy should go no further, I wish you, if it would not interfere too much with your many useful occupations, to take the trouble of looking over my manuscript before it goes to the press, with the three following views.

"In the first place, if I have any where mistaken or misrepresented your meaning, I shall be particularly indebted to you, if you will point out to me my errour;

"Secondly, if you perceive any of my own statements or reasonings to be fallacious, and can convince me with convenient brevity of their impropriety, this also will be a great favour, and I shall be ready in each instance to make a publick acknowledgment of my obligation to you;

"Thirdly, if you should think that I have detected in your work any inaccuracy, mis-statement, inconsistency, or false reasoning, and wish to retract what you have said, I shall gladly allow you an opportunity of doing it in my pages in any way, the most agreeable to yourself, which I shall think consistent with what is incumbent upon me in defending my side of the question.

"Although I have been under the painful necessity of replying to a considerable number of what appear to me to be palpable mis-statements of facts and bitter misrepresentations of Unitarianism, yet believing that these have arisen from no worse causes than carelessness, ignorance, and over-heated zeal, and that the *friendly* expressions in your

volume are to be considered as the true index of your heart, I am, dear Sir, and wish to remain,

"Yours with sincere respect and esteem,
"JAMES YATES."

"*P. S.* I shall probably prefix this letter to my Reply, that, if any disagreeable consequences do ensue from this controversy, the publick may see that I am not responsible for them. J. Y."

At the time when this letter was delivered, Mr. Wardlaw was from home. Having delayed my publication so long, I thought it necessary to begin the printing of it, but repeated, that I would gladly submit to him the whole of the manuscript except a few of the first pages. After his return I received the following answer.

"TO THE REV. JAMES YATES, GLASGOW."

"MY DEAR SIR,

"On my return from Ireland ten days ago, I found awaiting me your letter of the 17th October; my reply to which has been delayed by a variety of necessary engagements since coming home. I am obliged by your polite acknowledgments of the copy of my Work I had the pleasure of sending you at the time of its publication. But with the proposal which it is the chief object of your letter to make and to recommend, I cannot comply for the following reasons:—

"1. Even had the proposal been in its own nature reasonable and fair, such compliance would have been precluded by the circumstance, that your M.S. having now gone to press, I could not have the whole of it subjected to my inspection.

"2. The hasty perusal of a M.S. either already at press, or longing to be there, would be quite incompatible with

that mature and deliberate examination, which, on a subject of such importance, I should consider requisite, to do justice, either to myself, or, which is of unspeakably greater consequence, to the cause which I have undertaken to plead.—But

"3. The proposal, in itself, is on various accounts altogether inadmissible. First of all, my reasonings, as you hint, must be stated '*with convenient brevity;*' i. e. with brevity convenient for you, but which might not be, on all occasions, quite convenient for myself. Indeed, I should feel at a loss to know, for my direction in writing, what degree of latitude this phrase is intended to allow me.—2dly, While you would 'gladly allow me an opportunity' of making my concessions and retractions "in your pages' 'in any way the most agreeable to myself,' it must still of course be in such a way 'as *you will think consistent with what is incumbent on you in defending* YOUR *side of the question.*' Now, do you seriously think it would be quite consistent with 'what is incumbent on *me*, in defending *my* side of the question,' to commit the manner of my reply to the option of my opponent, giving him a *veto* on my own choice?—3dly, Am I to understand that you would allow whatever I might think proper to write, to be inserted in your pages *without note or comment?*—without any attempt on your part to invalidate its force?—Were you to do this, you would, I think, be unfaithful to *yourself:*—and yet were you to do otherwise, you would be unfaithful to *me;* for to offer any remarks in the way of answer, which had not previously been submitted to my revision, would be palpable deceit and treachery, such as might still necessitate, on my part, that prolongation of the controversy which you so strongly deprecate.

"Who would consent to be respondent, in such circumstances, and on such conditions, as these? I am very sure

you would not yourself, nor do I find it easy to bring myself to the persuasion, that you ever could seriously indulge any expectation of my compliance.

" In the Postscript to your letter, you intimate that ' you will probably prefix your letter to your intended Reply, that if any disagreeable consequences do ensue from this controversy, the publick may see that you are not responsible for them.'

" To what description of disagreeable consequences you here refer, I am at a loss to understand. And I am still more at a loss to imagine how the publication of your letter is to exonerate you from responsibility as to such consequences, should they ensue.—You and I, my dear Sir, are both of us responsible—and responsible to a much higher Tribunal than that of the Publick, for every thing we preach and every thing we publish, on this and on all other subjects ;—and it well becomes us, both to preach and to publish, under the solemn impression of such responsibility.—Whether it will be needful for me, in justice to the cause of truth, to answer your Reply, I cannot tell, till I shall have seen and examined it. But the controversy must go on in the usual course. A *co-partnery* work, such as you propose, would be, I presume, quite unique ; and in my judgment, as unsatisfactory as unprecedented. It is my earnest prayer to God, that He may direct both my understanding and my spirit in maintaining his cause :—and I trust you will excuse me for just hinting, that the detection of a few inaccurate statements or inconclusive reasonings, in my volume, (if such there be,) may leave entirely unaffected the great mass and main body of the argument. With the skill of an expert sharp-shooter, you may descry, and you may disable or kill, a detached straggler here and there about the walls, while the Fortress remains in impregnable possession of the Garrison.

"I trust I shall ever be preserved from that self-sufficient folly, which will contend against conviction, rather than humble itself to the acknowledgment of an errour. The charges, however, of '*ignorance*,' and '*carelessness*,' and '*bitter misrepresentation*,' it belongs to you, on the present occasion, to substantiate. As to '*overheated zeal*,' it is my daily complaint to the master whom I serve that its temperature is so low.

"The '*friendly expressions*' in my Volume were used, you may be well assured, *bona fide*. I cannot be more your friend, than by wishing you brought to a change of mind, and to the acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus. And, with the same sincerity which dictated the expressions you allude to, I subscribe myself,

"My Dear Sir,

"Respectfully yours,

"Ralph Wardlaw."

"North Montrose-Street,
November 7th, 1814."

"*P. S.* I take it for granted, that if you do prefix your letter to your Reply, agreeably to the intention intimated in your Postscript, you will feel the propriety of inserting this answer along with it. R. W."

When I sent my letter to Mr. Wardlaw, I had no idea that he would question my sincerity, and fully hoped that he would place in me such confidence as would enable us to pursue this friendly project of mutual improvement and correction: for without mutual confidence the scheme was evidently impracticable. I am conscious of no frivolous or dishonourable motive in making the request. If Mr. Wardlaw had submitted the same proposal to me respecting his Discourses, I should have complied with the greatest pleasure, and I think I could have been of some service to him.

I have no doubt that he might also have been serviceable to me; for, although I have used my best endeavours to be accurate in my statements, I cannot suppose that they are free from those errours, which must be looked for in every human production. But my principal wish was, that Mr. Wardlaw should be apprised of some of the instances of carelessness, indiscretion, and misrepresentation, which abound in his Volume, and which I have been under the necessity of noticing to such a degree as must wholly destroy its credit in the apprehension of all impartial judges. I imagined, that in most of the cases, which I have brought forward, he would perceive his errour almost as soon as it was laid before him, and a simple acknowledgment of inadvertency would have sufficed to put our readers in possession of those facts, by which the questions between us must be decided. Some of the expressions in my letter are certainly harsh. I used them, that he might see the full extent of my accusations against him, and because I always think it proper to speak of another in severer language to himself than to any one else. Whether my charges have been *substantiated*, the reader must judge. I again repeat, that from my heart, I acquit Mr. Wardlaw of any *wilful and deliberate* mis-statements, and attribute his faulty representations to ignorance of the subject, carelessness about particulars, and *over-heated zeal*, a quality inestimable in the application of sound principles to practice, but wholly out of place, when applied to the investigation of important truths. Whatever inaccuracies or improprieties shall be pointed out to me in this Volume, I hope I shall attentively consider and take the first opportunity to correct them, and be especially gratified by expunging any expressions, which appear disrespectful to Mr. Wardlaw. In writing these lines I joyfully erase from the tablet of my memory every feeling of hostility, and wish to behave henceforth towards

my opponent—my *friend*, as his moral and intellectual excellencies prompt my esteem. "Hic cæstus artemque repono."

Before concluding this work, I wish to add a few observations upon the measures, which may be adopted in consequence of the introduction of Unitarianism, and its probable increase, in this part of the kingdom. Considering the clear, abundant, and unanswerable evidence to the truth of the Unitarian doctrines, the tolerant and liberal spirit, the diffusion of information upon general subjects, the habits of inquiry and the turn for speculation, as well as the usual good sense, which prevail among the middling and lower orders of society throughout Scotland, it appears to me that the extensive propagation of Unitarian sentiments may reasonably be expected. The only material cause, which is likely to obstruct their progress, seems to be this; that, as many of those who embrace Unitarian principles will be men more disposed to enquire after truth than to apply it steadily to practice when found, and as the discussion of controverted questions in theology has a natural tendency to weaken the devotional feelings, the converts to Unitarianism may become careless and indifferent about their religious duties, and adopt habits of useless roving speculation to the neglect of their hearts and lives. Instead of concealing this formidable evil, it is infinitely wiser to bring it fully into view, so that we may be on our guard against it. If Unitarians, in the midst of that joy which often overpowers them upon the first breaking in of the light, be careful not to split upon this rock; if they be as anxious to improve their *hearts* as to inform their *understandings;* if they not only strive after the attainment of correct *ideas*, but attend yet more to the cultivation of the devotional, the moral, and the sympathetick *feelings;* if they diligently study the Sacred Volume, not so much to find whether it contains

the doctrines of this or that sect, as to lay up stores of consolation for the hour of distress, and maxims for the daily regulation of their conduct; in short, if they bear in mind, that "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart," and that the value of the Gospel itself consists only in its tendency to make men wise unto salvation; then Unitarianism will assuredly triumph over the united opposition of prejudice, interest, and passion; it is gone forth conquering, and to conquer.

But, if the progress of Unitarianism in Scotland is in the present state of things to be expected, what ought to be done to prevent those divisions in churches, those dissensions in families, that cold reserve, that closeness and insincerity, which in too many cases will be likely to accompany a change of religious sentiment. The learned Bishop Burgess has lately published a book, in which he advises that the Government should pass a law, condemning all avowed and obstinate Unitarians to three years' imprisonment. But the proposal comes at least a century too late. Many others will endeavour by ignorant misrepresentation and angry remonstrances to terrify their orthodox brethren from reading Unitarian books, or examining Unitarian arguments. But all in vain: opinions work their way in secret; the refined and subtle essence of truth eludes the tyranny of man; no human voice can say, Halt! to the march of intellect. Instead of these very objectionable methods of obviating the evils, which are to be feared from the progress of Unitarianism, I give my humble, but decided opinion in favour of a measure, which is at the same time recommended by many other considerations of still greater weight; a measure, simple, easy, righteous, and conciliatory; a measure, which, after calm and attentive deliberation, all wise, and most good men will cordially approve. It is, that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland should no

longer enforce subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, at least that they should permit exceptions to be made to so much of it as relates to the Trinity, and thus allow conscientious Unitarians to become ministers in the Establishment upon the same footing with Trinitarian candidates. If that much respected body shall not see fit to pass an act to this effect, I am not without hopes, that the example will be set them by some of the sects of Presbyterian Dissenters, those taking the lead, who are the most distinguished by their attachment to the Scriptures in preference to creeds of human invention; and it will in all probability be found, that they, who shall first, together with the Independents, the Baptists, and the Unitarians, avow and pursue the principle of making the Bible the only standard of their faith and practice, will be upon the whole the most distinguished by vigour and clearness of understanding, refinement and elevation of sentiment, sobriety of manners, commercial integrity and industry, and general respectability, good order, and happiness.

I have now executed my task. I recommend this humble Treatise to the blessing of the Almighty. Bidding adieu to controversy, it is my wish to indulge the flow of moral and religious feeling, and to employ the faculties, which God has given me, to the best of my ability, in useful labours among the living, and instructive studies with the venerable dead.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

PAGE 147.

It may be doubted, whether the Author has not stated erroneously the sentiments of Dr. Paley, as respects the doctrine of the Trinity. A few lines have been omitted at the conclusion of the paragraph, as containing a censure upon Dr. Paley, not authorized by an expression, which was probably not intended to be understood very seriously.

DISSERTATION, PAGE 173.

ON THE KIND AND DEGREE OF EVIDENCE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, AND BY WHICH WE MIGHT EXPECT THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY WOULD BE SUPPORTED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

It will easily be acknowledged, that in all inquiries which depend on moral evidence, the correctness of our conclusions will be very much affected by the standard of proof by which we try them. If this standard is either too high or too low, if we require either too much or too little evidence, we may disbelieve where we ought to be convinced, or be convinced where we ought to disbelieve. The skeptick, who demands a kind and degree of proof inconsistent with our moral nature, our state of probation, and the analogy of the divine government, is led to throw away the inestimable aids, and motives, and consolations, and hopes of christianity. The believer in Transubstantiation, on the other hand, who is satisfied with evidence insufficient both in its measure and its nature, is led to embrace a faith, which makes the gospel itself incredible, by making it responsible for a doctrine contradictory to nature, to reason, and to other parts of the scriptures themselves. It is evidently very

important, therefore, that we should guard against the danger of requiring too much, or of being contented with too little proof of our religious opinions. For this reason it seems to be proper, that one, who has never critically examined the proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity, should enquire, by what sort of evidence we may justly expect such a doctrine would be accompanied. Mr. Yates has touched on this subject: but its importance may be thought to justify a more ample consideration.

A doctrine may, *a priori*, or previously to a minute inquiry into its proofs, have a presumption either in its favour, or against it. A proposition which is at once perceived to be consonant to reason and the general tenour of the scriptures, will have a previous presumption *in its favour*, and may be believed to be a true doctrine of christianity, with little hesitation. On the contrary, a proposition, which is apparently both irrational and unscriptural, will have a previous presumption *against it*, and requires a more scrupulous examination, and a fuller and more unequivocal evidence, before it can be embraced. There is a previous probability, for example, that the doctrine of a providence will be found in the New Testament, and a previous improbability, that the doctrine of transubstantiation will be found there.

In applying this general principle, we may safely say, that there is a strong presumption that the scriptures will not be found to contain any doctrine apparently inconsistent with the unity of God. There is no truth of greater clearness or higher authority, than that there is but one God. Both philosophy and revelation unite in confirming it. The systematical unity and harmony of design* conspicuous throughout the universe, extending to the moral as well as the physical world,† lead us to the conclusion that the cause of all is One. All the arguments, which demonstrate the existence of God, lead us to the same conclusion. They all result in this, that the non-existence of an infinite, original, eternal mind, implies an absurdity, a contradiction,

* See Part II, Chap. 1.

† Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind, Vol. II. p. 324—7. Boston ed.

an impossibility. But this reasoning can hold of only one such mind. For, since one such mind is adequate to every effect, if it could be maintained that more than one could exist, it might be said of *each* of them, separately, that its nonexistence is possible; and necessary existence, therefore, could be proved of *neither* of them. That therefore, which is the essence of every argument for the being of a God, would lose all its force, and Atheism would be established on the ruins of all religion. But, indeed, the existence of one *infinite* mind excludes, by the very definition of infinity, the possibility that there should be more than one. If we attempt to form the supposition of a second infinite Being, we at once see, that it must in every particular be entirely coincident with the first; that is to say, as to all our ideas, it will necessarily be one and the same.*

To this great truth, that there is but one God, both the Jewish and Christian revelations lend all the weight of their divine authority. Nothing can be more full and express than their testimony to this point. It was the great object of Judaism to preserve this truth amidst the polytheism of the ancient world. So sacred was it esteemed by the Jews, that it was a custom of theirs even till modern times, to repeat every morning and evening the passage of Deuteronomy. HEAR, O ISRAEL, JEHOVAH OUR GOD, JEHOVAH IS ONE. It is needless, however, to multiply proofs of this point, since it is one of those primary principles, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum.* All christians, of every name, with whatever inconsistency it may sometimes be done, are compelled by the force of scripture testimony to acknowledge, that there is one God, and that there is

* "For if we suppose more than one, it is plain, since the attributes of infinite power, knowledge and goodness include all possible perfection, that they must be entirely alike to each other without the least possible variation. They will therefore entirely coalesce in our idea, *i.e.* be one to us. Since they fill all time and space, and are all independent, omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely benevolent, their ideas cannot be separated, but will have a numerical as well as a generical identity. When we suppose other beings generically the same, and yet numerically different, we do, at the same time, suppose, that they exist in different portions of time and space; which circumstances cannot have place in respect of the supposed plurality of infinite beings. We conclude therefore that there is but one infinite being, or God." Hartley on Man, Vol. II, p. 30, 4th edition.

none other, but He. We are authorized by this universal concession to take this doctrine as an axiom in all our reasonings on this subject, and to say that whatever else may be false, this must be true.

As therefore the unity of God stands on the highest possible evidence, we are sure, that all other truths of religion will be *really* consistent with it, and of course there is a high probability that they will all be *apparently* consistent with it. We ought to view every proposition, which seems to contradict it, with doubt and suspicion; for we are certain, that such a proposition must either be false, or else that we do not understand it. We are justified therefore in saying, that there is, *a priori*, a strong presumption against any proposition which apparently interferes with the doctrine of the Unity of God. We do not say that this presumption is so strong that no evidence can remove it. But we must all admit, that till the compatibility of such a doctrine with this primary truth is rendered manifest, every thing must be presumed against it, and nothing in its favour.

Now there is scarcely any one who will deny that the doctrine of the Trinity is *apparently* inconsistent with the unity of God. There is a strong *apparent* discordance, we must all own, between the two propositions, that God is One, and that God is Three. It is not till after many subtile and metaphysical distinctions are made, that any one will pretend that the harmony and consistency between them become visible. This is true of all the technical statements of this doctrine, which have ever been given. They have undergone many changes since the doctrine of the Trinity was finally completed towards the close of the fourth century; but the same essential difficulty still adheres to them all. It must always be affirmed, under some form or other, by every believer in a Trinity in unity, that *Three*, in some sense or other, *are One*, and *One is Three*. It is true, that while any term of the proposition is declared to be mysterious, ineffable, and indefinable, it is impossible to demonstrate that it affirms a contradiction. We only say of it that it is *apparently* inconsistent with the doctrine of the unity of God in the natural and plain meaning of words. We say only, that if it mean any thing like what such

words *would* mean in any other proposition, it means something between which, and the assertion that three Gods are one God, it is *difficult* to discern a difference.

The *apparent* inconsistency of the doctrine of the Trinity with the unity of God becomes much stronger, when we examine the *practical* statements that are given of it. In speaking of its theory, its advocates secure themselves from attack, by declining to say *what they mean*, and calling that a mystery, which might otherwise seem to be a contradiction. "Unless we have *some notion of* the thing itself," Mr. Wardlaw exultingly asks, "on what principle can we possibly make out its contrariety to reason." But the case is different in the practical statements of the doctrine of the Trinity. When the proposition is entire, and the contradiction would appear manifest if words were allowed to bear any distinct meaning, its friends protest, that they use the word "Person" only "for want of a better word," and declare, that we have no definite conception in what sense it is to be understood. But when they speak of the "Persons" *separately*, their difficulties seem all to vanish. Mr. Wardlaw after all his grave descant on mystery and things above reason, in stating the proposition of the Trinity, when he comes to discourse on the personality of the Holy Spirit, suddenly finds a flood of light open on him. His ideas become as distinct as those of other men, and it is evident he means by "Person" what every one else means. Thus it is with all the believers of the Trinity. When they speak of the persons who compose it separately, there is little difficulty in understanding their meaning. They ascribe severally to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, all that goes to make up our ideas of three perfectly distinct Gods. Each has a different name; different agencies or offices; distinct and independent power; and above all, each is a distinct object of supreme worship and adoration. Of the Father, it may be said that He is the infinite, eternal, self-existent God; of the Son it may be said, that He is the infinite, eternal, self-existent God: of the Holy Ghost it may be said, that He is the infinite, eternal, self-existent God. It is expressly declared, that these are not merely different *names* or different *modes* of operation of the same person. The pronouns

I, Thou, He, may be used as freely of each of these different "subsistences," as they may be of three different men. Now all we say of this doctrine, which applies the name and attributes of God to three distinct and independent agents, is, that to a common mind there is in it an *apparent* inconsistency, a *seeming* incompatibility with the doctrine that there is One God and none other but He. The most zealous Trinitarian must admit, that if the same proposition were found in the Hindu Mythology, we should take it, till better informed, for something very much resembling a contradiction.

The use we make of these facts and reasonings is, not to say that the doctrine of the Trinity *cannot* be found in the scriptures, but simply that we should not *expect* it to be found there. There is a very high probability, a strong previous presumption, that it will not be found there. A student of the Bible is bound to take it for granted, that it is not there, till it is proved that it undoubtedly is; he must conclude it to be false, till it is fully and clearly demonstrated to be true. Every thing must be presumed against its evidence, and nothing in its favour. It will prove nothing for such a doctrine, that passages can be produced, which may possibly mean something like it, unless it can be unequivocally shown, that they *cannot possibly mean any thing else*. We must all sit down to the study of the scriptures as Unitarians, and nothing but their clear and decisive testimony ought to make us Trinitarians.

We have suggested, that in proportion as the previous presumption against any doctrine is strong, the evidence by which this presumption is to be set aside may be justly expected to be correspondently abundant and clear. This expectation is heightened, in proportion as the sources, from which the evidence is drawn, are fewer and narrower. In a case like that of the Trinity, where the doctrine is acknowledged to be of the highest importance, and where the scripture testimony is the only medium of proof, we may certainly look for the utmost plainness and directness in every proposition relating to the subject. The presumption against the doctrine of the Trinity, and the consequent necessity of an increase of proof to remove it, become

stronger, when it is considered, that this doctrine, if proved at all, must *be proved from the New Testament alone;* as we shall now attempt to shew.

I am aware, that there is a small number of passages in the Old Testament, in which it is thought some allusions are found to a plurality in the divine nature. If these passages alone, however, were all the support of the doctrine of the Trinity, I imagine none would think them of great weight. No one will say, that a reader of the Old Testament *merely*, would find there any revelation of three distinct objects of supreme religious worship. He would find nothing from which he could infer, that Jesus Christ is the supreme, self-existent God, the Father of Jesus Christ also the supreme, self-existent God, and a Holy Spirit proceeding from them both, also the supreme, self-existent God. We may think, that *after* this doctrine has been clearly discovered in the New Testament, we may find allusions to it in the Old. But no one, I am confident, will affirm, that a reader of the Old Testament *merely, at the present day*, would find there any mention of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the connexion in which they are now used.

It is generally acknowledged, that this was in fact the state of mind of the great body of the Jewish nation, at the time of the appearing of our Lord. It has indeed been very laboriously attempted to be shown, that vestiges of something like a doctrine of the Trinity are to be found in the faith of the ancient Jewish Church. But it is conceded by Basnage, and even by Allix and Jamieson, that if this idea had ever been entertained, it was lost among the mass of the Jews whom our Lord addressed. Whether right or wrong, they were beyond all question wholly unsuspicious of any modification of the divine unity. Still, however, our argument admits of taking a less broad position; and to avoid all possibility of cavil, we shall simply say, that at the time of the introduction of the gospel, it was wholly unknown to any human being, that worship is to be addressed to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Let it now be considered, with what kind and what degree of evidence we are to expect this doctrine would be unfolded in the

New Testament. A doctrine of great magnitude was to be disclosed, against which there would justly arise, at first view, in the mind of every believer in the unity of God, a very strong presumption. It was not a truth of natural religion which was simply to be republished and confirmed,; but a truth was to be revealed in apparent contradiction to natural religion. The Jews, too, we must remember, had been accustomed to the greatest solemnity in every thing which related to the great and only object of worship. It was from the "awful top," and amidst the terrours of Sinai, that God declared to them, "I AM the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other Gods before ME." A most important modification of this commandment was now to be made. Two entirely new objects* of worship were to be revealed, and the first commandment was now to be so far changed, as to run more correctly thus: WE are the *Lord* thy *Gods*. Thou shalt have no other Gods before US. Let those, who deem so highly of the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity, who make it the basis of the gospel, who believe there is no Christianity without it, who think that all the best hopes of man depend on its truth,—let these persons say, with what clearness and what solemnity we might expect such a doctrine to be revealed? †

* No Trinitarian can object to this statement of their doctrine as teaching three distinct and supreme objects of worship. They certainly do represent our Lord to be as much an object of prayer and adoration, as God his Father. Indeed, if the three constituents of the Trinity are three distinct objects of thought, they are also three distinct objects of worship. If they are not distinct objects of thought, how absurd is it to pretend to speak of what we cannot even think?

† "I cannot help considering it as a monstrous insult to the Divine author of revelation," says Mr. Wardlaw himself, as truly as eloquently, "to admit the supposition for a moment, that on such subjects as these it should be necessary to wade through the multifarious opinions of antiquity, in order to understand his meaning. I say on *such subjects as these*; for if on *these* points there is such a want of explicitness—points that regard the objects of worship, the state and prospects of man, and foundation of his hopes for eternity,—on what subject shall we look for precision? If it were indeed the case, that on such topicks as these the Bible is indeterminate, requiring for the explanation of its language the commentary of ancient opinion, the infidel would be furnished with an argument against its divine origin, more powerful than any he has ever been able to produce." Preface. IX. [Nothing can be better said than this.]

Might we not expect, that our Lord himself would at least *once* have stated the doctrine of the Trinity in express language, and have insisted on the importance and necessity of believing it. Would he not, at least once, have declared formally and explicitly, that the first commandment was no longer to be understood in its plain and literal meaning; the meaning in which all his hearers had been accustomed to understand it. The word *God* occurs nearly *thirteen hundred times* in the New Testament, and might we not suppose, that, in some one of these passages, we should be expressly told, that the term is meant to include, not simply *one*, but *three* persons or subsistences, to each of which that title is applicable? If, in every instance where this word is used alone, it implies a plurality in the divine nature, should we be unable to find one solitary example of the application of plural pronouns in the whole New Testament? Would neither our Lord, nor any one of his Apostles, have left a single sentence, in which the whole doctrine of the Trinity can be fully and accurately expressed? Should we expect to find no care to make accurate and evident distinctions between the doctrine of a Trinity and the dangerous Polytheistical notion of the heathens? The doctrine of the unity of God is more than once introduced in the New Testament, and laid down most clearly and solemnly. Our Lord himself repeats these most impressive words to the Scribes. The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Now, could we have supposed, that, as our Saviour knew this would be construed by all his hearers as teaching, that there is only one object of supreme worship, he would have omitted such an occasion as this of declaring, that in truth there are three? Could we have supposed, that since the main argument for the Trinity, from the Old Testament, rests on the plural form of ALEIM, which Mr. Wardlaw translates *Gods*, the Evangelist should have chosen to destroy this argument by using the singular noun Θεος, which all know it is impossible should be translated otherwise than simply GOD?

If it should be said, that there might be reasons why our Lord did not *publickly* teach this doctrine, should we not expect some

account of his *private* communications of it to his *disciples?* Would they have preserved no record of their first knowledge of a truth so wonderful, and so essential a part of the Christian system? If we can suppose that our Saviour himself forbore to teach publickly that, which was in fact the great principle on which his whole Gospel turned, why this reserve in his disciples? The gospels were not written till several years after his death, and many of the epistles still later, and should we have expected, that they would not have given a hint of the time or the circumstances, when this stupendous truth was unfolded to them? Observe in the Acts, how minutely and fully the manner is declared, in which the doctrine of the extension of Christianity to the Gentiles was unfolded. And could we have thought, that the first revelation of the so much more difficult and so much more incredible doctrine of the Trinity, would not have occupied a single line of the sacred history? We are told so unimportant a thing as when the disciples were first called Christians. Would the time, when the worship of one object of adoration was exchanged for the worship of three, have been thought unworthy the passing notice of the recorders of our faith? If for any reason it was improper for the Apostles themselves, in all their different epistles, to give a single example of ascription to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, would it have been too much to expect, that we should be informed, *when* such worship was first made lawful and *necessary* for other Christians?

But if all these expectations were groundless—if it were necessary, that such a doctrine, though it must be learned from Scripture alone, should yet never once be fully and plainly declared in the Scriptures—if we could suppose, that it would only be dropped incidentally, and be left to us to collect and put together, from a few fragments of discourse thinly scattered through the sacred volume—if we could suppose, that not only whole chapters, but whole books, should exist without the smallest allusion to that which is the key-stone of the whole gospel—if all this were no more than was to be expected; still could we believe that the New Testament should contain any thing *con-*

tradictory to this doctrine ? Could we have supposed, that there should be TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY PASSAGES in the New Testament, from which our Saviour's *subordination* to the Father may be deduced ; and not less than FOUR HUNDRED AND FORTY passages in which the Father is so mentioned, as to lead to the conclusion that he is exclusively the supreme God. We may easily account, on the Unitarian hypothesis, for many very strong and elevated epithets ascribed to our Saviour, a Being so dignified in himself, so perfect in his character, so great in his office, and now so highly exalted by his God. But what account can be given of passages, which contain the most express and formal *contradiction* of the equality of Jesus with God ? Or, if this for any inconceivable reason was necessary, at least should we not expect, that the manner in which the contradiction was to be reconciled would be explained or hinted at ? If we were reasoning on any other subject, we should say, that one such passage as this, "My Father is greater than I," introduced with nothing to explain or limit it, would set aside a thousand mere *inferences* of *ours* in favour of a doctrine, which contradicts this truth. They who can believe, that, although it was the express design of St. John in his gospel to supply the deficiencies of the other Evangelists with regard to the Trinity,* he would yet set down without a word of caution or comment such passages as these, "I came from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of *him that sent me ;*" "My doctrine is *not mine*, but his that sent me ;" "The Father, which sent me, gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak ;" "The Father, *that dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works ;" "For THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN I ;" "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ *whom thou hast sent*"—they, I say, who can believe, that these and other similar passages would be set down

* This idea is maintained by Trinitarians, notwithstanding the evangelist expressly tells us : "These things are written that ye might believe, that Jesus *is the Christ, the son of the living God*, and that believing ye might have life through his name."

by a Trinitarian, in the act of proving his doctrine, with no word connected with them to restrain their natural import, ought at least to be more sparing of their charges on others of want of reverence for the Scriptures.

These expectations with regard to the kind and degree of evidence, which we might have expected to find in the New Testament, for the doctrine of the Trinity, are not only intrinsically reasonable, but conform to the analogy of the scriptures themselves. The doctrine of *immortal life* is in some respects under similar circumstances with that of the Trinity. Neither of them is expressly taught in the Old Testament; though it is thought that there are allusions to both. Moses, however, as he never taught the Hebrews, that there are more objects of worship than one, so he never employed a future life as the sanction of any of his laws. So far there is an agreement in the circumstances of the two doctrines. In all other respects, that of the Trinity is by far the stronger case, and would seem to require a much fuller and clearer revelation. The doctrine of immortality is one, which, if not demonstrable from the light of nature alone, certainly has many most powerful arguments in its favour. Bishop Butler has finely shown, that there is nothing in the fact or circumstances of death, which furnishes any presumption against its truth. We know it also as a historical fact, that it was the belief of the great body of the Jewish nation at the time of our Saviour's advent. The Pharisees who embraced it were the ruling party. All these are circumstances which would seem to diminish the necessity of a very full, formal, and frequent recognition of the doctrine in the New Testament.

But how stands the fact? This doctrine, which is really a fundamental, is treated as such throughout the New Testament. It shines every where in heaven's own light. It fell constantly from the lips of our Lord. It is asserted and reiterated by every one of his Apostles. It is interwoven into the whole texture of Christianity. If then such plenary proof is afforded to a doctrine, which reason, instinct, the tradition of the earliest antiquity, and every good feeling of the human heart, all dispose us to embrace,

what evidence may we not justly expect for such a doctrine as the Trinity ? The previous presumption is all *against* this opinion, as much as it is *in favour* of the doctrine of immortality. Up to this very day, its advocates have been unable fully and fairly to state it in any language, in which terms have a known and definite meaning, without involving an assertion of three Gods, or else an express and manifest contradiction. We have a right to expect, therefore, that this difficulty will be removed in the Scripture, and that all we are to believe on this subject will there be expressed in plain and intelligible language. It is from this source alone, we are to remember, that we are to gather all our ideas on this subject. This high and awful mystery lies wholly within the province of revelation. How strong and clear, then, will be the light, which will be shed on it in the sacred volume, if it be indeed a truth, and especially a fundamental truth of christianity ! How much stronger and clearer, than that which is thrown on the doctrine of immortal life !

I have thus attempted to state some preliminary considerations, which ought to be kept in view by every one who is about to examine the New Testament on the subject of the Trinity. It is believed to be utterly impossible, that a man of a sound mind, who carries with him to the Scriptures just views of the evidence which this doctrine demands, or may be expected to possess, can receive it as a part of the gospel, especially as a truth essential to salvation.

ON THE WEAKNESS AND ABSURDITY OF THE PRETENDED DISTINCTION OF TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.—SEE EMLYN'S WORKS—VOL. I. P. 97—105.

TRINITARIANS have but one shift left for the evading the plain arguments which Scripture affords against their system, and that is a distinction which serves them in all cases; for *they say*, Jesus Christ, when he speaks of his inferiority to the Father, speaks these things of himself *as man only*, while he had another nature *as God*, which he reserved, and excepted out of the case: So that when he says, *I cannot do* thus of myself, or *I am not* to be called the *chief* good, or I *do not know this*, &c. according to *them*, the meaning is, "I have not these perfections in my *human nature*; but yet I know and can do all unassisted, and am the chief good in my *divine nature*, which also is more properly myself." The vanity of which subterfuge I intend now to lay open, by shewing how absurdly this distinction of the *two natures* is pretended, to take off the force of such expressions from Christ's own mouth, which in their natural and undisguised appearance do proclaim his inferiority to God, even the Father. And I shall dwell the more upon this, because it is the most popular and common evasion, and comes in at every turn, when all other relief fails.

It would be no unreasonable demand to ask, what intimation of any such *distinction of two natures* they can point us to, in any of these discourses of Christ? Why should men devise or imagine for him such a strange and seemingly deceitful way of speaking, from no ground or necessity, other than that of upholding their own precarious opinion? But I have several remarks to make upon this common answer.

1. That which in the *first* place I have to object against it is, That our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, if *himself* was the Supreme God in any nature of his *own*, could not have said such things, in any consistency with truth and sincerity, which he always maintained strictly: he could not say, that *himself could not do*, or *did not know* the thing, which all this while *himself could do* and *did know* very well, if he was the supreme God: for this

were to make him say what is most false, and to *equivocate* in the most deceitful manner: for though we should suppose, that he consisted of two infinitely distant natures, and so had two capacities of knowledge, &c. yet since, *himself* includes them both, it follows, that the denying a thing of himself in absolute terms, without any limitation in the words or other obvious circumstances, does plainly imply a denial of its belonging to any part of his person or any nature in it. For, though we may *affirm* a thing of a person which belongs *only* to a part of him—as I may properly say a man is wounded or hurt, though it be only in one member, suppose an arm—yet I cannot justly *deny* a thing of him which belongs only to one part, because it belongs not to another; as I cannot say a man is not wounded, because though one arm be shot or wounded, yet the other is whole.

For instance, I have two organs of sight, *two eyes*. Now suppose I converse with a man with one eye shut and the other open; if being asked whether I saw him, I should dare to say I saw him not, without any limitation—meaning to myself, that I saw him not with the eye which was shut, though still I saw him well enough with the eye which was open—I fear I should bear the reproach of a liar and *deceiver*, notwithstanding such a mental reservation as some would attribute to the *Holy Jesus*. For knowledge is the *eye* of the person; Jesus Christ is supposed to have two of these knowing capacities, the *one* weak, the *other* strong and piercing that discerns all things. Now as *such* an one, the disciples repair to him, and ask him, when the end of the world and time of his coming shall be? He answers them, by giving them some general account of the matter, but says that the particular *day and hour* he knew not, nor did any know but the Father—meaning (say my opposers) that he knew it not with his *human* knowledge, tho he knew it well enough with his *divine* at the very time that he said, *the Son knows it not*, absolutely and indefinitely.

And yet if Jesus Christ had a *divine* knowledge and nature, no doubt his disciples (who, if any body, must be supposed to believe it) directed the question to that, rather than to the imper-

fect human capacity ; and yet in answer to it he says, he *knew not the day*, which would not be counted sincerity or truth in men; much less was Jesus Christ in danger of it ; in his mouth *no guile was ;* let us not impute it to him.

That you may see this is fair reasoning, hear how some of the other side own it, when out of the heat of this controversy. See Dr. *Stillingfleet's* sermon on *Mat.* x. 16. speaking of the equivocations of Popish Priests, whose common answer, when examined about what they have known by confession, is, that they *know it not ;* which they think to vindicate from the charge of lying by saying, that *in confession, the Priest knows matters as God, not as man, and therefore he denies to know them, meaning it as man.* But says the Doctor, this is absurd ; because to say he does not know, is as much as to say he doth not *any way know.* Now if this be a good answer against the *Papists*, as no doubt it is ; then sure it is so in the present case. Therefore when Christ says he knows not the day of judgment, it is as much as to say he does not *any way* know it, and consequently, it is a vain shift to say, it was as man only : we must beware lest we bring the Holy Jesus under such a reproach for equivocation, as the Romish Priests lie under ; and make the *Jesuits* themselves think they have a good title to that name, by imitating herein his example, which in this very instance they alledge with so great advantage, according to this interpretation.

2. As a farther evidence, that Jesus Christ intended no such distinction of two natures, as is pretended ; it is to be observed, that he puts not the *distinction*, or opposition between the *Son of man*, and the *Eternal word* (as some speak) but between the *Son* and *his Father : Not the Son knows, but only the Father ;* by which it is plain, he had no thought of including any person or nature *of his own* among the excepted : for whatever was not the *Father*, he says was ignorant of that day. Now it is certain that in *no nature* was the Son the Father ; and consequently where *none* but the Father knows, none, who is *not* the Father, can be intended : and since our Lord was making an exception in the case, he would not have forgotten to except the *Eternal Word*

too, if there had been such a divine principle in himself, *equal* to the Father and distinct from him; for it is a known *rule*, that an exception from a general assertion, confirms it as to other instances not excepted.

Will they say, that by the Father is meant all three persons here, *viz.* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? What! can the *Father*, as opposed to the *Son*, be put for the Father and the Son? What woful work will this make with Scripture, to suppose that things opposed to each other do include each other, under the very characters by which they are opposed? As well may they say that in the baptismal form, by the *Father* is meant, Father, Son, and Spirit, though he be distinguished from the other two. And I should despair of ever understanding the Scriptures above all books that ever were written, at this rate of interpretation. No doubt therefore, but the *Father*, as opposed to the Son, excludes all that is the Son; and then there could be no Son of God that knew of that day which only the *Father* knew of, and consequently no Son that is God *equal* to the Father.

3. Moreover, That interpretation must needs be unjust, which, if admitted, will make all, even the most plain speech, *uncertain*, and utterly insignificant; as this interpretation of Christ's words would do. For I ask the patrons of this opinion, in what words Jesus Christ could *in brief* have denied himself to be God most high, if he had a mind to do it, more plain and full than these, in which he says, *he knew not all things as the Father did*, nor *could do all things*, &c.? And I would fain have them shew me what words of that nature he could have used, which the *same way* of interpretation, as they here use, will not *evade* and make insignificant. For had he said, or *sworn* in plain words thus, *viz. I tell you I am not the Supreme God*, and none but my father has that glory; they would upon the *same reason* still have said, this was to be understood of him as *man* only. So that no words professing himself *not* to be God, could be a proof of it, if this way of interpretation be allowed. I may therefore safely say thus much, that the blessed Jesus has declared himself *not* to be the supreme God, or equal to the *Father*, as plainly as words could

speak, or in brief express; and that this declaration made by him already is not to be evaded in any *other way*, than what will make it impossible his mind should be understood by any words he could have designedly used in the matter. Let any one try if this do not hold true: and sure it must be an absurd way of interpretation, which leaves a man no opportunity or power of speaking his meaning *plainly*, so as to be understood.

4. Again, this way of interpretation, which the advocates of the opinion I oppose are so much necessitated to for upholding their cause, does plainly overthrow it again, and may be turned against themselves: for if it be just and true to deny of Christ *absolutely* what belongs to him *in one nature*, because there is another nature in which it belongs not to him; then, since to be the chief God belongs to him (according to our adversaries) only in *one nature*, and not in respect of the other, or human nature, it follows, that it may justly be said, Jesus Christ is *not God*, nor to be *worshipped* or trusted as such; nay, that he was not before the *Virgin Mary*, and the like; and this without adding any limitation or restriction, any more than our Lord does in the place mentioned.

What would they say to one who should speak or preach so, *That Jesus is not God*, that he cannot do all things, nor is equal to the Father, *&c.*? Would they not conclude he was a denier of the Deity of *Christ*, else he would never speak so unguardedly? Upon the same account, when Jesus Christ himself says, that *he cannot of himself do all things*, *nor know all things*, and make *no reserves* in his words, we may conclude that he also *denies* his being supreme God; *else*, if it be a just way of speaking in him, it cannot be unjust in us to imitate him, by denying him *indefinitely* to be what he in any one nature is not, *i. e.* that he is *not God*, without adding more.

Nay, after this way of speaking which they attribute to Christ, a man may be taught to say his creed *backward*, and yet make a true profession of his faith, by denying of Jesus Christ in *absolute* expressions whatever may be denied of one of his natures. Thus since the *Apostles' Creed* takes notice of nothing to be be-

lieved concerning Christ, but what belongs to his *manhood*, (which is strange, if there were any articles relating to his supreme Deity, which must be most important) one may venture to deny them all, with this *secret* unexpressed reserve, *viz.* meaning, to deny them of the divine nature to which they belong not. So that one may say, I believe that Jesus Christ was *not* conceived of the *Holy Ghost*, or *born* of the virgin *Mary* ; I believe that he *never* was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, nor was dead or buried ; that he *never rose* nor ascended, nor will *return* visibly again : for his divine nature which it is pretended he had was not capable of these things. And since they say, the personality is divine, here seems more warrant to be bolder in denying indefinitely of the person what belongs not to the divine nature, whose the *personality* is, than in denying of the person what only belongs not to the human nature; as this interpretation makes Christ to do.

5. Finally, it weighs something with me, in opposition to this way of interpretation, that the Evangelists never take any occasion (when they had so many) to subjoin any *caution* against taking Christ's words in their obvious sense, when he says, *he did not know the hour*, &c. and the like. If, as we said, our Lord had no mind to reveal his divinity, (though I see not still why he should deny it thus) yet sure his Apostles, who wrote so many years after, whom it concerned to reveal all important truths most clearly, would not fail to have set the reader right, by removing such obvious objections as these are against the supreme Deity of Christ; and saying, he spake this only in respect of his *manhood, that he knew not all things*, &c. But here is not one caution given, as often we find there was about less matters. No doubt it was because they would have the thing understood as it fairly lies, not thinking of any such secret reserve in Christ, of a *divine nature* in his person, to be tacitly excepted, when he had denied such perfections of his person indefinitely.

The following very able dissertation may be read with advantage under the present head. It is extracted from the *Cambridge Repository and Review*. Vol. I. pp. 74—89.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION EXAMINED.

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"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the "battle. So likewise ye, except ye utter words easy to be understood, how shall it "be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.—

"If I know not the *meaning* of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a "barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." *St. Paul.*

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QUESTION :—*Can it be properly said that a person believes the truth affirmed by a proposition, the terms of which he does not understand?*

In every proposition there are certain words on which the meaning essentially depends. The import of these terms must be understood or we cannot understand what is affirmed.

Example. The *Square Root* of *one hundred* is *ten*. I may have a clear idea of the import of the terms *one hundred*, and the term *ten;* but still I shall be ignorant of the truth affirmed unless I know the meaning of the words *Square Root*. Can I, then, believe in the truth of the proposition while I am ignorant of what is affirmed?

Answer. If the proposition be stated by a scholar on whose veracity I rely, I may believe that he *speaks the truth*, although I am ignorant of the truth he affirms. But it is one thing to believe that what is *stated is true*, and another to believe in the *truth itself*. I may have such confidence in the knowledge and veracity of another person, as to believe that he speaks the truth, while I know not the meaning of one word he uses. He may affirm something in a foreign language, with which I have no acquaintance, and I may verily believe that his declaration is true, while I am perfectly ignorant of the truth he affirms. But to believe in the truth affirmed we must have a *perception* of that truth. This, however, cannot be had prior to a knowledge of the *meaning* of the terms adopted.

As words are often ambiguous, we must not only know *some meaning* to the several terms used, but we must know the *particu-*

lar sense of the words in the given proposition, or its meaning will not be understood.

Example. There are three *minutes* in one *league*.

Here we have two principal words, both of which are ambiguous, viz. *minutes* and *league*. The term *minutes* is used to denote the records of a court; sketches or memorandums of events, transactions or discourses; the sixtieth parts of an hour, and the sixtieth parts of a degree. The term *league* is used for a *contract* between two or more persons; it also denotes a measure of three miles, or the twentieth part of a degree.

To understand the proposition last stated, we must know the particular sense of its terms. For if we mistake the meaning of either of the principal words, we necessarily mistake the sense of the proposition.

Suppose the words to be used by a man of known information and veracity in a company of unlearned men; from confidence in the speaker they might all believe that his affirmation contained a truth. But in how many different senses might his language be understood, by attaching different ideas to the terms he used.

One acquainted with geography takes the true idea, that a league is a measure of three miles.

Another by *minutes* understands *time*, and thinks that a league is such a distance as requires three minutes in sailing or running.

A third, by *league* understands a *contract*, and by minutes *written particulars* of a transaction. He supposes that the speaker affirmed that in a certain contract three distinct particulars were implied.

A fourth, by *league* understands *contract*, and by *minutes* time: he takes the idea of a contract which required three minutes for writing, or which was to be binding on the parties only for the space of three minutes.

A fifth, by *league* understands a *contract*, and by three *minutes* so many *miles*. Of course he forms the idea of an enormous contract three miles in length.

Others of the company might form ideas different from any of these, and others still might have no definite idea communi-

cated to their minds. Thus a company of a hundred persons, from confidence in the speaker, might believe his declaration to be true, while but one believes in the truth affirmed. All who mistake the *meaning* of the terms, mistake the import of the proposition; and while they believe it to be true, their real belief is according to their mistaken views of the terms.

From confidence in the scriptures as the oracles of God, a person may believe that every proposition in the Bible is true, and yet he may be ignorant of nine tenths of the truths affirmed in that sacred book.

Several persons may agree in a belief that a certain Bible proposition is true, and yet each one may have a different opinion from any of the others as to the meaning of the text.

Example. "Thou art the CHRIST the SON of the LIVING GOD."

Christians of every denomination believe that this proposition is true; and true in the sense in which Peter used the terms. They, also, agree in the belief that Jesus was the Christ or promised Messiah. Thus far they unitedly believe not only that the proposition is true, but in the truth affirmed. They moreover agree that there is truth in the affirmation that Christ is the SON of the LIVING GOD. But, still, how various is their belief in respect to the sense in which he is the Son of God, or the ground on which he is so called.

One affirms that Christ is one of *three persons* in the *one God*, and eternally begotten.

A second, that he is one of three persons in the one God, and called a son on account of his Mediatorial office.

A third, that he is one of the three persons, and called a son on the ground of his becoming incarnate.

A fourth, that he is one of the three persons, and called a son because his human nature was "created by an immediate act."

A fifth, that he is one of the three persons, and that the man united to him was called the Son of God as saints are sons of God.

A sixth, supposes him to be a *super-angelic creature*, and as such called the Son of God.

A seventh, supposes him to be a mere man, extraordinarily endued, and thus called the Son of God.

An eighth, supposes him to be a *human being* who had pre-existence, and was in a peculiar manner united to the one God, the Father, so that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead; and, therefore, called the Son of God.

A ninth, supposes that he was truly a *man*, who had no pre-existence, but was united to the Deity as intimately as our souls are united to our bodies; and that he is called the Son of God on the ground of the miraculous conception.

A tenth, supposes him to be *truly* and *properly* the Son of the LIVING GOD; that he derived his existence from Deity as a *son* from a *father* before any creature was formed; and that he became man by a miraculous union to a human body.

Although all Christians may believe that Peter's proposition is true, in affirming that Jesus Christ is, in some sense or other, the Son of God, yet no one can believe that it is true in all these various senses. The *last* accords with the natural import of this language used respecting him, "*own Son*," *only begotten Son of God*, &c. And if this be the true sense, those who believe him to be the Son of God in either of the other senses, do not believe the truth affirmed by Peter. But by mistaking the meaning of his words, "the Son of the living God," they mistake the import of his confession, and believe in error;—as really so, as the man did who believed in the existence of a contract three miles long on hearing it said that there are three minutes in one league.

Hence we infer that a man's professing to believe that a proposition is true, is no certain evidence that he believes the truth thus affirmed. To be satisfied that a man believes the truth contained in any article of faith we must be satisfied that he understands the terms. If it be evident that he does not know the meaning of the words, it will, also, be evident that he does not know the *sense* of the proposition.

We may, also, observe, that a proposition may be strictly true, and a man may firmly believe it to be true, and yet by mistaking the terms, his sentiment or faith may be perfectly erroneous.

A creed, or confession of faith, may be perfectly correct; a man may adopt and subscribe it believing it to be true; and yet his real opinions may be perfectly inconsistent with the opinions expressed in the articles he subscribed. A number of persons may unite in adopting the same articles of faith while they are really opposed to each other in sentiment.

In the light of the preceding observations, let us now candidly examine another proposition, and the faith of its advocates.

Proposition. "There are three distinct persons in one God."

This is viewed, by many, as an article of the first importance in theology; it therefore demands a careful and thorough examination. And as it is not in the Bible we may safely criticise on its import, as we would on any other proposition invented by man. It is with *this*, as with all others, to believe what is affirmed, we must first understand the terms. Without this, we know not what is affirmed, nor what is believed by those who say that the proposition is an article of their faith. And if they do not understand the terms, how do they know what they believe?

Had the proposition been expressed in a foreign language with which we have no acquaintance, should we not have needed a distinct explanation of the words? Would it have been consistent to adopt the proposition as an article of faith prior to knowing the *meaning* of its terms? It is indeed expressed in our own language, and in terms which are common and familiar, yet if we do not know the *sense* in which they are here used, we do not know what is affirmed.

The terms are used according to their natural import and common acceptation, or they are not. If they *are*, the proposition contains the same absurdity as saying there are *three distinct persons* in *one King*. For the term *God* in its common acceptation as really means *one person* as the term *King*. And by three distinct persons we usually mean three *distinct beings*, as really as when we say *three distinct men*. Therefore, according to the common acceptation of language the proposition is of this import, viz. there are three *distinct beings* in *one being*, or three *distinct persons* in *one person*, or three *distinct Gods* in *one God*.

But as the advocates for the proposition disavow these ideas, must they not admit that they use the terms in a sense, foreign from their common signification? And when terms, which are common and familiar, are used in a sense foreign from their natural import, do they not require as distinct explanation as words of a foreign language? And until this explanation be given, is not the meaning of the proposition a matter of mere *conjecture?* Yea, and are not people in more danger of being misled by common and familiar terms when used in an uncommon or unnatural sense, than by words with which they have had no acquaintance? Will not the familiar sense of the words always first arise in the mind on sight of the proposition, and remain as the sense intended, until the person be better informed by some explanation?

If the terms *one God* are used in a sense analogous to *one Council* or *one Triumvirate*, then they must be understood, in order to obtain the sense of the proposition. But if by *one God* be meant one *intelligent Being*, so the terms must be understood, or the meaning will not be apprehended.

If by three distinct persons be meant three *proper persons* or beings, we must so understand them. But if by three persons be meant only *allegorical persons*, as three *modes*, or three *attributes*, or three *offices* personified, the terms must be so explained and understood, or the meaning of the proposition will not be perceived.

As an article of faith, it has been explained in more different ways than there are words in the sentence. By some modern Trinitarians,* it has been explained to mean three *distinct agents*

* Those who believe that the *one God* is *three persons* appropriate to themselves the name *Trinitarians*. Therefore the term is here used in that sense. But the writer wishes it to be understood, that he does not deny the scripture doctrine of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*. He, however, believes the doctrine, that God is three persons, does really imply a *denial* of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit* in the scripture sense of those terms. Before the Messiah appeared in the flesh God said thus, "I have put my spirit upon him." Isa. xlii. 1. This was prophecy; and when the Messiah was inducted into office, God proclaimed, "this is "my beloved son in whom I am well pleased;" at the same time "the *spirit* of God "descended and abode upon him." John says, "I saw and bare record that this is

in one *Being*. But in every other case the terms *three distinct agents* mean *three distinct beings*. These expositors have, therefore, yet to explain what *they* mean by *distinct agents*, in contradistinction to *distinct beings*. And until this be done, we cannot tell what they mean by the proposition, or whether they mean any thing which can be understood.

It is suspected, that the most numerous class of divines have meant *one proper person*, and *two allegorical persons*, or the *wisdom* and *energy* of God personified for the Son and Holy Spirit.

Another class have supposed, that by the three persons no more is intended than the *power*, *wisdom*, and *love* of Deity personified.

A fourth class, by three distinct persons, have meant *three distinct offices*.

A fifth class by three persons mean the same, as *three beings*, some how so united as to be one God. And this, it is suspected, is the most common idea among the unlearned who have affixed any meaning to the terms. But some divines, as well as many other people, use the form of words without any definite meaning, and do not profess to know what *is* intended, or *ought* to be intended, by them.

All these various classes profess to believe that the proposition contains a truth of the first importance. But are we to suppose that it is true in all the various senses in which it has been explained? This no person of discernment will pretend. In *what sense*, then, *is it true?* If it be true in any *one sense*, and in *but one*, of what value is the faith of those who believe it to be true in any other sense? they are so far from believing the truth affirmed, that they believe in errour, as really, as those by whom the article is totally rejected. With sufficient self-complacency, and not a little censoriousness, has it not been pretended that

"the Son of God."—He also said, "God giveth the Spirit not by measure unto him." Thus, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Such is the scriptural account of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*. But in all this account, the Father is the one God, Jesus is *his Son*, and the *Holy Spirit* is that with which God *anointed* and *endued* the Son in whom he was well pleased.

the doctrine of three distinct persons in one God has been believed by all the true Church of Christ from the days of the apostles to the present time? But after all, it may be asked, how far have Trinitarians themselves been united in their belief? And what has been the amount of their faith? Can it be said that they have been agreed as to the *meaning* of this article of their faith? Certainly not: for it is well known that from generation to generation, divines have, in this respect, been much divided in opinion. Has not their agreement consisted merely in admitting a *form of words*, as an article of faith, which the best divines have explained in many different senses? If merely agreeing in a form of words implies union of sentiment, we may affirm that all professed Christians have been united in opinion respecting the character of Christ. For all have admitted the proposition that he is "the Christ the Son of the living God." Yet we have seen a great variety of opinions respecting this article of faith; and about the same variety among Trinitarians themselves, respecting the import of their favourite article—"There are three distinct persons in one God."

Let any one fix on either of the explanations which have been given, and then inquire, whether there be any evidence that a majority, even of Trinitarians, have believed the proposition in that particular sense. Let us farther inquire, whether there be not reason to suppose, that nine tenths of those who have admitted the article, have done this, affixing to the words no definite meaning, or one which implies three distinct Beings? And whether it be not a fact, that ninety-nine out of a hundred have admitted the form of words on the authority of others, without any careful examination respecting their import?

I do not, indeed, admit this combination of words as a correct expression of any Bible truth. But excepting this single circumstance I am, perhaps, as much of a Trinitarian as one half the persons who have adopted the article. I believe in the *three attributes* of God, *power*, *wisdom*, and *love*. And this is all that some Trinitarian divines have meant by the three persons in one God.

I believe that God acts in three distinct offices, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. This is what others have meant by three persons.

I, also, believe in God, as one proper person or intelligent Being; and in his wisdom and energy; and that these may be sometimes personified. This, it is supposed, was the trinity of Origen, of Calvin, and of Baxter, and their numerous, genuine followers. Why, then, am I not as really a Trinitarian, as the several classes whose sentiments have now been represented? These several classes, it is believed, comprise much the greater part of all the Trinitarian divines who have lived since the year A. D. 381, when the doctrine in question received its "finishing touch." Why then may I not have *some* share in the *renown* attached to Trinitarian orthodoxy?

It may here be proper to inquire, what virtue or praise-worthiness can there be, in believing a proposition to be true, while its meaning is *unknown?* If I have evidence that the affirmation was made by God, or one inspired by him, my believing it to be true, while its meaning is unknown, may be evidence of my confidence in the wisdom and veracity of Jehovah. But I may not thus call any *man*, Father. When men state what they believe, in a form of words, not found in the scriptures, we have a right to ask what they *mean*. And if they have any definite meaning they can make it known. If they say they know not the meaning of their own terms, we may safely say, they know not what they affirm. If they cannot tell their *own meaning*, how can they reasonably expect others to adopt their proposition as an article of faith? But if the writer of a proposition has a definite meaning to his words, and that meaning be the truth, yet if another adopt it with a different meaning, he in fact embraces errour instead of truth.

It is the opinion of some ministers, that it is best to give no explanation of the doctrine of three persons in one God. They say it is a mystery, and no explanation can be reasonably expected. Hence they feel under no obligations to tell what *they mean* by the three distinct persons. Why, then, would it

not have been infinitely better to have left the subject just as it stood in the sacred oracles ? Does it become men to express, as articles of faith, their own opinions of the import of any passages in the Bible, in language which they themselves cannot explain ? If there be passages of scripture which are to us mysterious, would it not be far more wise and safe to let them stand as they are, and wait for farther light, than to pretend to express their import in propositions unintelligible to ourselves and to others ?

Moreover, if the passages in the Bible, which are supposed to favour the doctrine in question, be really mysterious beyond explanation, how does any mortal know that their meaning is expressed in the unintelligible proposition ? To know that this expresses the meaning of any passages of scripture, we must first know the meaning of those passages, and then the meaning of the proposition, so as to be able to compare them together. Yet men venture to express, what they say is the meaning of scripture, in language which they cannot explain. Not only so, they make their own unintelligible form of words an essential article of Christian faith ; and that too, while they know not the meaning of their own terms.

To me it appears, that there is no passage of scripture, which has respect to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, which is half so difficult to explain, or half so likely to be misunderstood as the proposition now under examination. Yet this unintelligible combination of words must be considered as so sacred, as to be made a criterion of Christian fellowship. But notwithstanding all the importance which men have attached to this article, and all the confidence with which it has been maintained, it is a serious fact, that those who reject it, are no more opposed in sentiment to those who embrace it, than those who admit it are opposed to each other. And is it not, also, a fact, that the greater part of those who have adopted the article, are as ignorant of its real import as a blind man is of the colours of a rainbow ? Confiding in the "*tradition of the Elders*," without examination, they have adopted the proposition, either with *no meaning*, or as great a variety of *discordant meanings*, as were supposed in the

company of unlearned men who heard it affirmed that there are three minutes in one league.

Is it not much to be lamented, that men of eminence in learning and piety, with sentiments *really discordant*, should contend for a human proposition, which is professedly inexplicable, as though the whole fabrick of Christianity were depending on this as its foundation? If it be an errour for people to believe a *plurality* of *self-existent Beings*, who can reasonably doubt that this proposition is of bad tendency, if left unexplained? For who is able to distinguish between *three persons* and *three beings?* And might we not just as safely tell common people, that there are *three beings* in *one God*, as *three persons* in *one God?* They know not any difference between a *person* and an *intelligent being*.— And where is the divine who will hazard his character so far as to attempt to explain the difference? There may be *some* who will venture to *say* there is a difference; but I have not known of any one who has attempted to state in what the difference consists. If, then, it be a fact, that the terms, *three distinct persons*, do naturally convey the idea of *three distinct beings*, and no one explains the difference, it is evident that the proposition has a direct tendency to lead people into the belief, that there are three distinct intelligent beings some how united in one God. Does it not, then, seriously behove the advocates for the proposition, either to agree in some intelligible explanation, or to give up the article as *useless* and of *evil tendency?*

The conduct of one sect, in assuming the title of *rational Christians*, has justly been accused by Trinitarian writers. But whether some of them have not been equally reprehensible may be worthy of consideration. How much have *they* laboured to make the world believe, that true piety has been found only among Trinitarians? And which is the most indicative of pride, for a sect to arrogate to themselves a *peculiar share of rationality*, or *all* the *piety* in the Christian world?

For the purpose of self commendation, or to cast an odium on others, or to deter people from a thorough examination of their sentiments, or for some other purpose not very obvious, some

have taken considerable pains to impress the idea that all, or nearly all, who depart from Trinitarianism, proceed from bad to worse, until they make shipwreck of the faith once delivered to the saints. And, of course, when any one openly dissents from their creed, they would have the publick expect that he will totally apostatize from the Christian faith. Such representations procure applause to those who can thus *commend themselves;* they excite a jealous, censorious, and clamorous spirit towards such as feel bound to dissent from the popular mystery; and they, also, deter multitudes from any impartial examination of the doctrine in question, or any thing proposed as more scriptural.

It is my wish not to render evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but may I not ask whether a resort to such methods, for the support of the Trinitarian cause, is not beneath the dignity of the clergy of that denomination? Does it not evince *want* of solid argument, and *inattention* to the true *state of facts?* Before such representations are any more urged, it is wished that Trinitarian writers would attend a little to the following reasonable inquiries.

In what sense did the bishops of Constantinople understand the terms, Three distinct persons in one God? Dr. Mosheim informs us that it was a council in that place which "gave the *finishing touch*" to this doctrine in the year A. D. 381. As it had not received "its finishing touch" till that time, it seems to be a matter of high importance to know what those bishops meant by he terms they used; for the doctrine was then in its primitive purity. Had these bishops any *definite meaning* to their words? or did they *mean every thing* which has since that time been held by Trinitarians on the ground of this article? If they had but *one* meaning to their proposition, what was that *one meaning?*

Did they *mean* that God is *three distinct agents?* Some would, probably, be pleased to have this granted. Let this, for the present, be admitted as the true Trinitarian doctrine. What then has become of Calvin, of Baxter, and the many thousands who have supposed that the *Son* and *Spirit* are the *wisdom* and *energy* of Deity personified? And what has been the fate of all the other

classes of Trinitarians who have supposed the three persons to be three *modes*, or three *attributes*, or three *offices* personified? And those also who have so far dissented as to use the terms without *any meaning?* Are all these classes to be considered as apostates, having drawn back unto perdition?

Again, was the original doctrine of three persons in one God no more than Origen's *allegorical Trinity*, improved by the use of the word *person?* There are pretty strong reasons for supposing this to be the fact. If so, Calvin, Baxter, and those who have agreed with them, have been the true Trinitarians. And those who have given a different meaning to the proposition have been *dissenters*. What, then, will become of those who hold the three distinct agents in one God? Are they apostates and in the road to perdition? Will not the doom, which some have passed on all who dissent from the strict Trinitarian doctrine, involve themselves among the apostates?

Moreover, it is well known, that Doctor Watts departed from the doctrine of three persons in one God in the latter part of his life. And do Trinitarians wish to have it believed that Watts is among the damned? and that all his disciples have gone, or are going, to the same place of torment?

Once more. It is desired, that those who have been disposed to deal so largely in censure would consider, what a number of apostates *might* be reckoned up, who never departed from the Trinitarian doctrine, but have, by their *practice*, made shipwreck not only of Christian *faith* but Christian *works*. If an invidious mind should make a full collection of such names, and attribute their apostasy to their having embraced Trinitarian sentiments, might not the catalogue bear a comparison with any which has been made out by Trinitarian writers. And would it not be treating them, as they have been disposed to treat those who have dissented from their opinion? But would it not, at the same time be rendering evil for evil, and reviling for reviling?

On such ground, it would be very easy to raise a hue and cry against every denomination of long standing. But is it not as *abominable* as it is *easy?* There have been, and are now, many

very many amiable characters among the Trinitarians; nor do I feel any less respect for them on account of the many bad characters of that denomination. But neither bad nor good characters are exclusively of any one sect of Christians.

But although *some* Trinitarians are not altogether so candid toward such as reject their favourite proposition, they are remarkably liberal towards each other, in respect to the latitude allowed for explanation. With any one, of the seven or eight distinct opinions as to the import of the term, a man may stand on very fair ground. And a man may be a *very good* and *firm Trinitarian*, if he only admit the favourite article, without *any opinion* of its *real import*. The great thing requisite, is, to admit the proposition as true, in some sense or other, either known or unknown.

There is indeed some occasion for this extensive candour in respect to the various explanations; for it must be evident to every person of discernment, that the proposition cannot be understood according to the natural import of the terms. Its meaning, therefore, must be a matter of *conjecture*. And every explanation which has yet been given, in a greater or less degree, contradicts the most obvious import of one or other of the terms of the proposition. Most of the explanations perfectly exclude the idea of *three distinct persons*, and represent God as strictly *one person* as he is supposed to be by any Unitarian.

But is it not extraordinary that there should be such zeal for a *form of words*, while it is viewed as a matter of such indifference what meaning, or whether any meaning, be attached to them? What are words but vehicles for the conveyance of truth? Shall then the *form of words* be held so sacred, and the *meaning* of them be of no importance?

To this it may be replied, that the subject is mysterious, and we cannot expect words to be clearly explained which are used to express a mystery. But if the subject be mysterious, then, for conscience sake, let it stand in the words of *inspiration*, and not in the words of *human wisdom* or *human folly*. If the texts of scripture, which are supposed to support the proposition, be mys-

terious beyond explanation, is it any thing short of extreme presumption to pretend to explain them, or to form a proposition in other words as expressive of their import? And especially to do this, by a combination of terms which no human being can unravel or explain?

If these passages of scripture be really of mysterious and inexplicable import, and the proposition founded on them be so likewise, how can any man know the *meaning of either*, or whether they are *accordant*, or *discordant*, with each other? Can these things be known otherwise than by special inspiration? And if the *import* of the proposition be *unknown*, can it be less than absurd to attempt to support it by the *unknown meaning* of any passages of scripture? In such an effort do not men attempt to support *they know not what*, and by *they know not what?*

Some will probably think that giving up the proposition, is giving up a fundamental article of the Christian faith. But if its *meaning* be *unknown*, how can any one *know* that it contains any *gospel doctrine?* For surely this form of words is not found in the Bible. And if the *meaning* be *not known* it cannot be made to appear that giving up the article is giving up any *divine truth.*

It may, also, be said, that giving up this proposition will be giving up a doctrine which has, for many ages, been a source of comfort to the friends of Christ. But which class of the Trinitarians have been the partakers of this supposed comfort? Or have all the various classes been alike comforted? If the comfort has been the *same to all*, has it not resulted from the *sound* rather than the *meaning* of words? Or shall we say, that the various and contradictory meanings have been alike conducive to comfort? But what shall be said of that class who have admitted the article without affixing *any meaning* to the terms? Have they, also, had a *share* in the comfort? If so, on what ground has it resulted?

It may, perhaps, be supposed by some, that the comfort has in a great measure resulted from the *humility*, implied in admitting, as true, a proposition which is so *perfectly mysterious* and *unintelligible*. But if this be the ground of the comfort, must not

some deduction be made from the *supposed amount*, on account of the *pride* of those several classes who have attempted to *explain the mystery* or to tell the *meaning of the term?* And must not the greater portion of the comfort be set to the account of those, who have been so *very humble* as to receive the *form of words*, as sound, without *pretending to know their meaning*, or even making *any serious enquiry* repecting their *import?*

On the whole, is it not worthy of the most serious inquiry, whether the supposed comfort has not resulted chiefly from the *popularity* of the *mystery*, and the opinion, that true piety and the true church have been found only among Trinitarians?

But, in calculating the *real benefit* of Trinitarianism to the Christian world, it may be proper to have *some* respect to the *evils* of which it has been *productive*. It has unquestionably been an occasion of *great perplexity* and *embarrassment* to such Trinitarians as have been much in the habit of thinking and inquiry. It *may* have been the occasion of much *dissimulation* with many who have had too great regard to their own popularity. It has, in time past, been the occasion of considerable *animosity* among different classes of its advocates. It has been the occasion of much *bitterness* and *alienation* between those who have embraced the article, and those by whom it has been rejected. This bitterness and censoriousness has been the occasion of great *grief* to pious souls of every denomiuation. Add to these evils, the enormous flood of *sinful revilings*, poured forth by the contending parties, and the *uncomfortable* and *unchristian feelings* which they have indulged one towards another.

Now, from the sum total of the *supposed good*, deduct the sum total of the *real evils* and *mischiefs;* then let CANDOUR estimate the *amount* of *real benefit* to the Christian world; and will it not pronounce on the *contested proposition*, as Jehovah did on the *useless Monarch* of Babylon;—TEKEL,—*thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting?*

FINIS.